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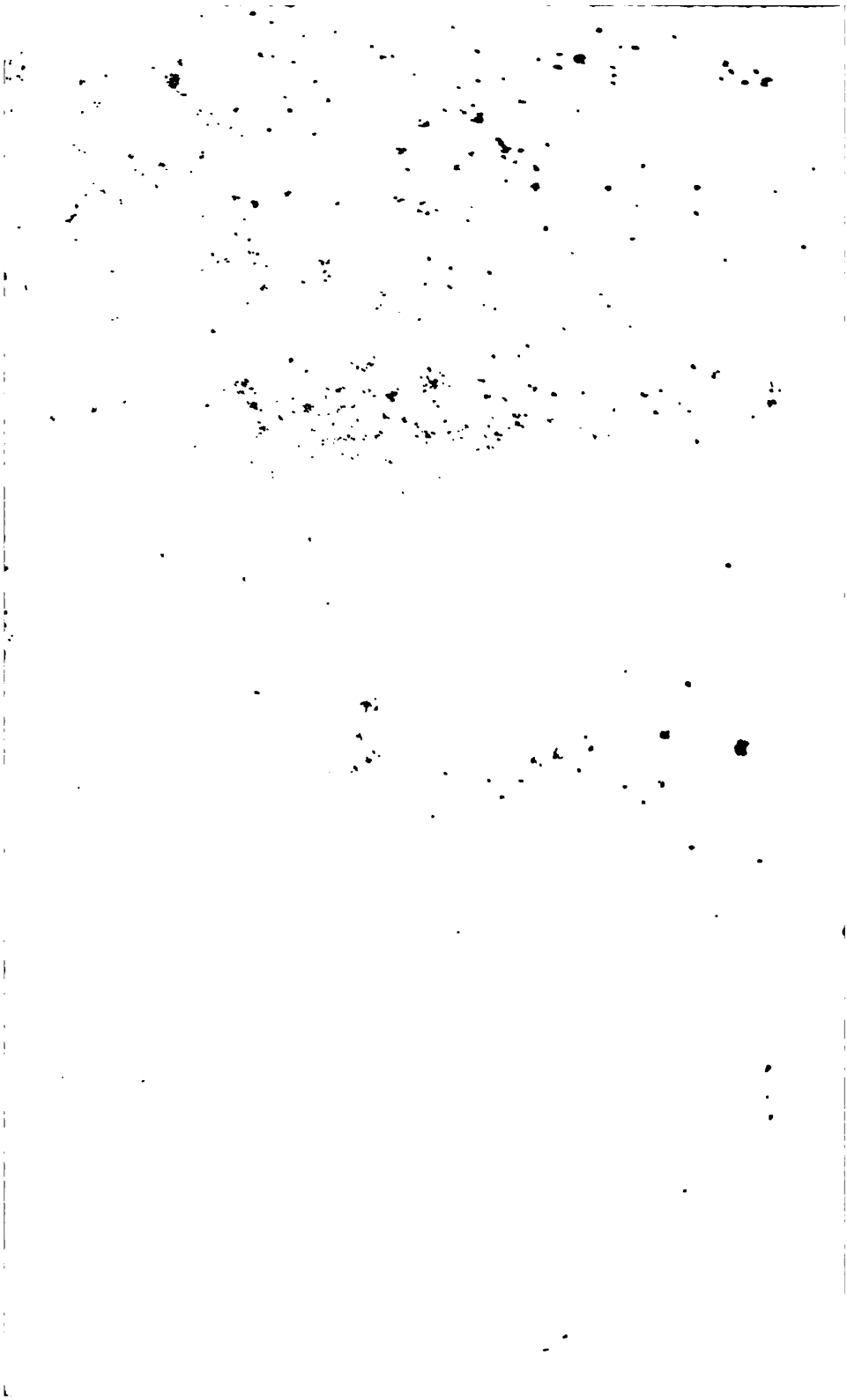


Candid Notices.

CANDID NOTICES,

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL,

DESIGNED TO

AMUSE THE MIND

AND TO

AMEND THE HEART.

BY THE REV. THOMAS NEALE, M. A.

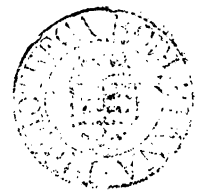
LATE RECTOR OF TOLLERTON AND SIBSTONE.

Nos in diem vivimus; quodcunque animum veritatis specie percussit, id scribo.

RUGELEY:

PRINTED BY J. LEONARD.

1817.



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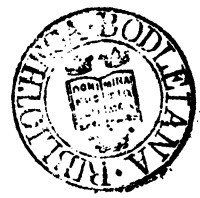
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PREFACE.

As an Editor must in a great degree be considered responsible for the imperfections of his publication, even though it be not his own production, I should look upon myself as guilty of a reprehensible neglect, if I dismissed this little volume without a few observations, which arise from the interest I must naturally feel for it. The work itself rests on its own merits, these alone must decide its success, and a laboured defence of it, in me it would be both presumptuous and superfluous to offer. I have, and that not entirely in the confidence of my own judgment, ventured to present it to the public; if it

prove acceptable, there can be no need of apology; if not, I cannot flatter myself that any thing which I could urge in its favour, would render it more so: I trust however, that I shall not subject myself to the censure of having injudiciously brought forward that which it would have been more prudent to have suppressed. To the principles which the work professes, little objection can I think be made; for the unconnected manner in which they are offered, I feel more solicitous. I would beg the reader to keep in view, that they were not written with any determinate end, which could admit of arrangement in its parts, but were the impressions suggested by objects as they severally presented themselves; and as such, may not, I think, unaptly be termed a picture of the author's mind in retirement, and divested of the mask, which in an intercourse with the world, even the most

sincere must appear to wear; of his mind, not as disclosing itself to casual observers, the most penetrating of whom must in many instances be deceived, but with its most secret recesses laid open to the view of others, as candidly as to his own; and I cannot but promise myself that to some, to contemplate the private workings and occupations of a soul, when devoted to subjects of this nature, will be no unpleasing employment.

The manuscript which I had in my possession was not a corrected one; it might perhaps have been intended to have thrown these materials into a more regular form; however this might be, I should scarce have felt myself justified, had I even been equal to the attempt, in endeavouring to supply the deficiency: on this account it seemed advisable not even to alter many expressions, which to modern ears might sound uncouth, lest it might prove a deterioration

rather than an improvement; should this objection be made to the language, I think that the period in which it was written (1771) is the best apology that can be offered.

I am aware however, that to speak at large in what refers so much to myself, and to be diffuse in my excuses, would be arrogance rather than modesty; and perhaps almost insulting to the highly respectable Subscribers, who have honoured me with their patronage, and to whom I beg to return my warmest acknowledgments, with too much sincerity to render necessary many studied professions of gratitude.

P. P. N.

Abbot's Bromley,
October, 1817.

INTRODUCTION.

I am of opinion, it concerns myself and mankind in general, to keep our minds in continual exercise upon what is good. If we do not set them upon work, our great Adversary will, and and if our minds do not work for God, they will work for him. Sinful objects are agreeable to sinful minds, but holy thoughts are more conformable to a holy God. Why then should most men spend their time and thoughts, upon those things that may destroy their souls? No, henceforth may I endeavour to employ my thoughts and leisure time, upon something that is good, and have good subjects constantly at hand to think upon. And likewise may I take occasion from objects I meet with, and persons with whom I converse, to make such reflections and notices,

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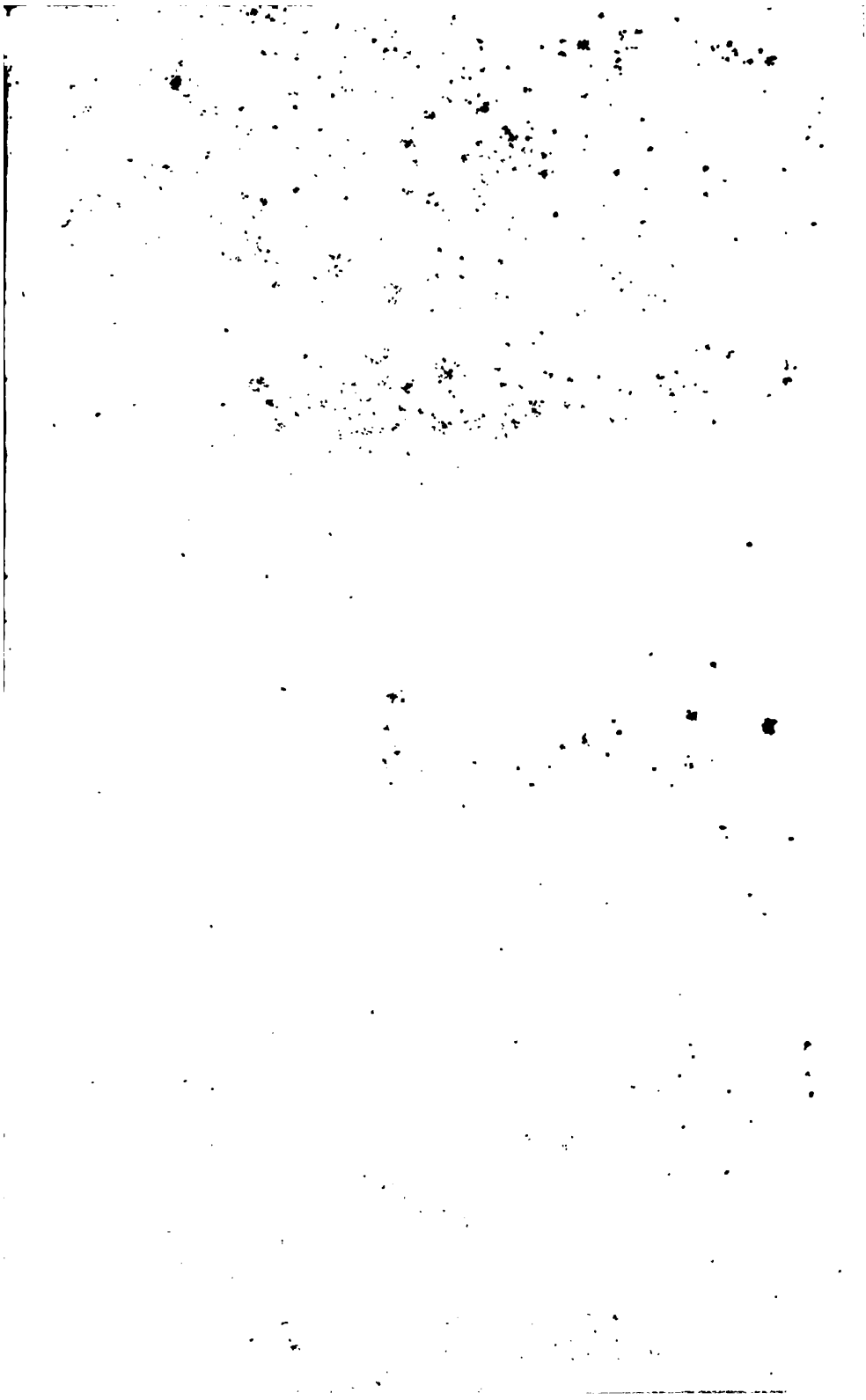

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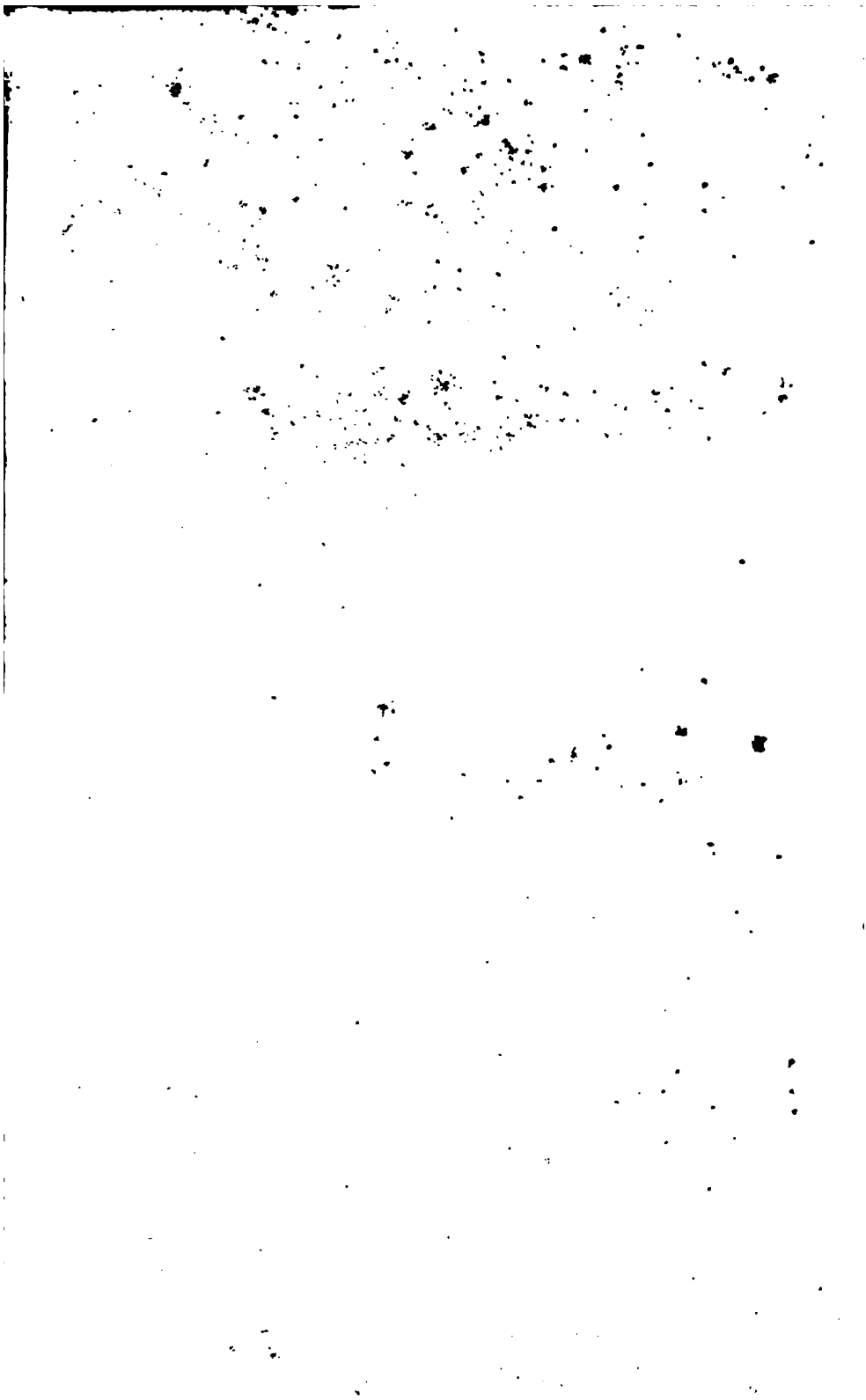

Candid Notices.

tion; and the sick, their health:—here, the miserable may find a forgetfulness of their misery; it is here, that a person, disgusted with the world, meets with that true repose, which causes him to look without envy, and even with pity, on the agitation of those that are fastened to those restless labours, that perpetually return and scarcely know an end.

He who sits too high in the favour of his Sovereign, is liable to be delivered up, on public disorders, as a sacrifice to appease the fury of the populace. He who labours for a popular esteem, ought to be looked upon by his Prince to be a dangerous subject. Agreeable, then, to Phœbus's caution to his son Phæton,—it is the safest for men to steer the course of their lives in a middle station.

If the mind of man be fitted to fewer enjoyments, where there is convenient provision, such a person shall have more quiet and rest, than he who hath more enjoyments, when his mind is let loose and grows too big for what he hath:—the best way to contentment then is to restrain desire.

EPIPHANY.

It is amazing to observe what little value, in general, men set upon spiritual favours; how they slight, and disesteem them! What can be the reason? I know not, unless it be, that they do not sufficiently reflect of what great importance they are. Would they but resolve in their minds, that the light they receive is that whereby they are to be directed to everlasting happiness, and by which they are to avoid eternal misery; this, undoubtedly, would excite their praises, and make them sensible of the obligations thereby laid upon *them.* Praised be God! Our blessed Saviour became a light to enlighten us Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel. He came to rescue us from darkness and uncertainty, and render our path to Heaven plain and easy. Do not such favours deserve our thanks? Undoubtedly. Let us then never be remiss in paying them, but let us adore the goodness of the Almighty, in manifesting by the appearance of a Star, his only-begotten dearly-beloved Son unto

us. It is from this manifestation that we derive our hopes of happiness. We Gentiles, who were once despised for want of knowledge, do now, through God's abundant mercy, abound with it; the darkness is dispelled and light shines round about us.

"All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the jew sitting at the King's gate." Had Haman been of a more humble disposition, this had been no mortification to him; but thus the lofty cedar falls by that blast of wind that offends not the lowly shrub.

As a rock in the sea lies exposed and subject to the beating of the waves of it, raised by every wind, from whatever quarter it blows. So are we in this world, subject to the trouble, impertinence, and disquietude of every vain and deceitful person that can come near us: we had need then to be armed with patience, and to walk circumspectly amongst our fellow-creatures, as amongst snares.

Solomon observes, "where there is no timber the fire dies out." But, as the barking of one

dog provokes the barking of another, so words of anger returned to him who injures us, stirs up but more contention.

It is a token of the foulness of the blood when spots break out and appear on the face; it is a sign the house is full of smoke within, when it breaks forth from the doors and windows without. So is it an undoubted token of corruption in the heart within, when evil shews itself in a person's life and conversation without.

Temperance is not so well known in want as it is in wealth; to abstain when we have not, may be of compulsion; but in the midst of affluence to be continent is great sobriety.

Manna gathered more than the Almighty commanded, turned into worms; so riches kept more than God allows, oft become unprofitable to their possessors.

I would favourably ask this question,—If a Prince would take it well, that in paying him homage his subject should turn his back and pay it to him with an air of disdain? Yet this is what

some too frequently do to God. They do not give him half their hearts:—and can it be thought a light offence to despise him whom Angels adore? or neglect his service which is the most perfect freedom? The Lord is King, let the earth stand in awe. Alas! men too seldom think upon this; and because he does not speedily avenge the outrage committed against his divine Majesty, they acquire a habit of neglecting his service without even a seeming concern.

Time is one of the richest talents, which we are entrusted with, and for the improvement of which we are accountable to our Creator and our Preserver. It is given us to prepare for eternity. If we trifle away the present we know not whether we shall be spared to an hereafter. Remember, therefore, ye sons of men, your Maker in the days of youth; and let the sprightly powers with which you are endowed, be laid out in the noblest pursuits, I mean the glory of the Almighty and the securing your own future happiness.

It hath been the opinion of many good men, and I cannot help entirely agreeing with them, "that no persons live in a more wretched, in a more miserable state of bondage, than those who in mind and body are led captive to their silly pleasures."

It is become fashionable I think, to strive to be more witty than wise: I cannot deny but that wit in itself is a very valuable endowment, and serves for many good purposes: for instance, to adorn truth and to represent it to the mind in a becoming dress,—it serves to expose what is base, *odious, and ridiculous,*—it serves to quicken a solid argument and render it more convincing,—it serves to endear society and give a relish to conversation. Though I say then, wit is a very useful endowment, to these and other purposes, yet unless a wise man has the keeping of it, who knows when, where, and how to use it, it flies about like wild-fire, and blows up every thing without discrimination; nay, even sometimes the most grave, serious, and even sacred things

and persons, escape not its lash:—but certainly, no one will say, this is to apply it to any commendable purpose.

If ever men despair to excel and attain unto eminence, it enervates their powers of action, and obstructs those advantages in knowledge, which they might otherwise make. Sure it is, high stations and public employments are not absolutely needful; but virtue, and that eminent, may be in any and ought to be in every station of life; and where it is, it is discerned by the all-penetrating eye above, and as it is beheld with approbation, in due season it will be rewarded.

There certainly is a near alliance between words and actions; they spring from the same source, and the same heart produces them. I think therefore, a person cannot better dispose his mouth to sing the praises of the Almighty, his mind, to contemplate on his wondrous works, and his soul to raise itself, than by the practice of good works.

What an age of quiet and happiness should

we enjoy, if men of understanding, if men of birth, if men of fortune, would always offer themselves to the world, as proper patterns of life and conversation; by this means, many might be won over to be good who are not so, and religion would soon recover her injured character: were such persons' lives, as pure as their profession is, the profligate would be ashamed to appear; their party would be made inconsiderable, and they would have but little power to draw others over to their vices. There is not a more engaging sight hardly, than the life of a christian, suitably spent to the precepts of his religion:—and were there not indeed, some persons of fortune and authority, whose love of virtue inspires them with so much zeal, that they are neither ashamed of being honest nor afraid of being innocent, whatever the censorious part of the world may say, or think of them for it, probably we should soon lose, not only the power, but the form of godliness amongst us; for too many make shipwreck of their consciences, by reason they have

not courage sufficient, neither can they endure to be out of fashion.

The Christian Religion denies men no pleasures suitable to nature; it only forbids those excesses, which are in themselves hurtful. What then, can any one object to it? when it only lays the solid satisfaction of that peace, of that joy, which no external thing is able to discompose.

When a man is careful to speak what is good, and to perform what is honest; to say well, to do better; endeavouring to be what he would seem to be; avoiding every appearance of evil; when he is zealous, suitably to his capacity, to promote the public good; acting sincerely, prudently, and justly; striving to make the times, wherein he lives, the better for him;—this will prove the most effectual means to make his name glorious and honourable, and his memory precious.

I trust, that people in general will not suffer it to be a discouragement to them, in the pursuit of Religion and Virtue; though it appears from

the times, that preferment or respect usually follows the circumstances, more than the qualifications of the man.

Happy is that mistaken man, who, like St. Paul, has the irregularity of his past proceedings pardoned; his former errors rectified; his well-intended mind informed; his will made ready to submit to, and comply with, such means, as the ordinary method of knowledge and salvation, seconded by God's grace, shall furnish for those purposes:—for men are not now, I think, to expect, that God should go out of the usual way, and work miraculous conversions upon every person who does ill, perhaps without designing it.

A person may possess an estate and yet not enjoy it; he may have the dominion of it, but not the comfort.

These three parts may be observed and distinguished in prayer; things prayed for,—the expressions by which these are made,—and the disposition of the soul wherewith the prayer is offered

to the Almighty: of these, the last is the principal, by reason we are informed it is that which God chiefly regards. That way of praying then, must be preferable, which tends most to help our attention to the last particular. It seems to amount to a proof, by how much the less our mind is taken up, in attending to the two first parts, by so much the more it may attend to the third. In forms of prayer, we know that the things prayed for, and the expressions, are prepared; consequently, the mind is left wholly to attend to the devotional part; whereas, in extemporary prayer, his mind who officiates, is taken up with thinking of matter and clotheing that matter with expressions; which is attending to the two inferior parts of prayer, so far as to have little opportunity for attending to the principal part, I mean, the devotional. I leave it then to the judicious and impartial, from hence to judge, whether forms of prayer be not preferable to extemporary effusions.

It is losing the price of a benefit to talk of it, and to commend a man's self, for the advances

he has made for his friends; nevertheless, he who has received the friendship, ought not to forget it, nor be dismayed when he sees his benefactor.

The cheeks of an honest man, will never be stained with the blushes of recantation; nor will his tongue falter, with the secret glosses of a double or reserved sense:—his fair conditions are without dissembling; actions he prefers to words; falsehood he hates; he is a faithful client to truth, and no one's enemy.

When a man recollects the afflictions and virtues of King Charles 1st; and remembers, that in his virtues he excelled the most happy Princes; in his afflictions he equalled the most unfortunate of men; though it should not incline us to murmur at Divine Providence, whose judgments are above our knowledge, and ought not to come under our censure; yet, certainly, it must cause us to abhor the shocking effects of furious zeal; it cannot but raise in us a detestation and hatred of faction, under pretence of liberty; of ambition, when it counterfeits Religion.

PRAYER.

Father of mercies, and God of all consolation! Let thy Holy Spirit dwell and rule in my heart. Keep me from all sins and uncleanness. Cleanse my mind from evil thoughts, and incline me to do the thing that good is. Suffer me not to grieve, weary, or provoke thy Holy Spirit; but make me obedient unto it; that it may dwell with me richly, and teach me to call thee Abba, Father; that I may, from a pure and perfect heart, always pray unto thee. Let me ever acknowledge thee in my ways; continually do that which is lawful and right, and well-pleasing in thy sight; yea, let it be my director and comforter in this life, and let it guide and bring me at last to thine everlasting kingdom; let it seal my soul unto the day of redemption:—and this I beg of thee, for thine infinite mercies and compassion, and for the sake and through the merits of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER II.

THE generality of mankind, seem inclined to live so dissolutely, and the world is so full of examples, either ridiculous or hurtful, that I cannot but in some measure be of opinion, that retirement, nay, singularity, kept within proper bounds, nearly approaches to reason, and would be a commendable conduct.

There is no provision so large,—there is no retirement so secure,— there is no search so happy, as to find out that place, where cares or misfortunes may not make their way.

CANDLEMAS.

Almighty and everlasting God! I beseech thee, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh; so, I may be presented unto thee, with a pure and clean heart, by the same, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION ON INFANT BAPTISM.

I cannot but be of opinion, it is as much the duty of Christians to baptize their children now, as it was the duty of the Israelites, to circumcise theirs. St. Peter's question, then, "can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"* may be applied in this case: can any person forbid water, that children should not be baptized, who are in covenant with the most High God, as well as we? I would ask, what is it the right of baptism depends upon? Not upon performing the conditions of the covenant; for then, none should be baptized, but such who are true believers in themselves, known to be so by us, and consequently, none at all: it being God's prerogative alone, to search their hearts, to know the truth of that grace, which himself has bestowed upon them. But, children's right to baptism, is grounded upon the outward profession of their believing parents: that, as a King may be crowned whilst an infant; not because he is able to wield the

*Act, chap. x. 47.

sceptre, or manage the affairs of his kingdom; but by reason, he is heir to his father. So, children are baptized, not because they are able, to perform the conditions of the covenant which is sealed to them; but because, they are children of believing parents. This, too, seems evident, from the nature of seals, which are annexed to any covenant; not because the conditions are performed, but that they may be performed: so children are baptized, not because they are already true christians, but that they may be so hereafter. As for a command for infant baptism, I think the same law that *enjoined circumcision* to the Jewish children, enjoins baptism to the children of Christians. The reason why Jewish children were to be circumcised, was, because they were Jewish children; born of such as professed the worship of the true God, and in covenant with him: there is the same reason, why Christian children are to be baptized, because they are Christian children; born of those who profess the true worship of the same God, and are allies in the same covenant with the Jews

themselves; and there is the same end for both, *viz.*, that the children might be admitted into the same covenant with their parents, and have it visibly confirmed to them, by this initiating seal put upon them: so that circumcision and baptism, are not two distinct seals, but the same seal, diversely applied; the one being only a type of the other, and to give place, whenever, by the institution of Christ, it should be brought into the church. Was there indeed, never a command in the New Testament for infant baptism, yet, forasmuch as there is one for circumcision, in the Old, and for baptism, as coming into the place of it, in the New; I look upon baptism as necessary to be applied now to infants, as circumcision was then. But why should any person suppose there is no command in the New Testament, for infant baptism? There are some portions of Scripture, that seem to imply its being practised in the first preaching of the Gospel; as in the case of Lydia,* and the Keeper of the prison, who had their whole families baptized, and we do not find that children

*Acts, xvi. 15, 33.

were excepted; on the contrary, St. Peter, pressing the Jews who were converted to be baptized, to bring them to it, makes use of this saying, "The promise is unto you, and to your children," which may as reasonably be understood of their infants, as of their grown-up posterity. But, it was the express command of our Saviour to his disciples, that they should go "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;"* meaning, go ye and preach the Gospel amongst all nations, and endeavour to bring them over to the embracing of it; that, leaving Jewish ceremonies, and Heathenish idolatries, they may profess my name, become my disciples, receive the truth, and follow me: which, if they do, I charge you to baptize them, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

It matters not,—it shall be my maxim always to speak the truth, so far as I know it, whether it please or displease: and these two points I mean to be steady in, my affection to our Civil Settle-

*Matt. xxviii. 19.

ment, and my adherence to our Ecclesiastical Establishment in the Church: to which I hope I shall never omit a third, which is a dutiful acknowledgment to my relations and friends, from whom I have already received, and may hereafter receive, kindnesses.

From many dangers, power will protect; many offences may be concealed by art, and lie hid under the cloak of hypocrisy; but when a man's conscience arises to reveal and to avenge, guilt blushes through her mask, and trembles behind her bulwarks.

My friend! take it for a truth, that it is a very false way of measuring your honour by your sword, upon every trifling occasion; perhaps a mistress, a word, a slight carriage, or the like, which are the usual causes of duels, which are the dishonour of a man, much more of a Christian, by how much it is his honour to pass by offences. It is more creditable to make peace, than to add fuel to strife, which too often ends in death.

When a marriage is completed, that takes its rise from good sense, inclination, and equality in years, joy is diffused through every branch of the family; parents, relations, and friends, taste the good effects of so happy a union. The whole, indeed, is a representation of heaven, as near as our present state can come up to it. But when we view the other side of matrimony,—the black, the melancholy, the tempestuous part of it,—the object is too hideous to be looked at,—the subject too dismal to delineate.

There is a strange perverseness in our nature: we love, and hate, at wrong seasons. Past and future pleasures, we view through magnifying glasses: the present we seldom enjoy; but, like children, cry for those play-things, which when we have in our hands, we tear to pieces.

It is urged by some, that jealousy is a token of love; it may be so, but I think, it is such a species of love, as is attended with all the ill properties of hatred.

It has been an observation, by some made,

and I do not think it void of foundation, "That, where the obscurity of the Scriptures, or the weakness of human understanding, has caused one to mistake, many have been led into error, either by their lust, their desire of gain, through indolence, or through sloth. By this means, chiefly, are the dissenting parties amongst us maintained and encrease; *viz.*, by levelling the doctrines of Christianity, to the corrupt inclinations of men. But myself, who am a Minister of the Church of England, dare not be so false either to my trust, or the souls of those committed to my care, as to give hopes of future bliss, upon any other condition, than what the Gospel requires, which is, 'Living godly, righteously, and soberly.'

As long as goodness endures, gratitude and praise can never cease. How can we use them too often then? Thy mercies, O Lord! are more frequent than our praises can be; and, as thou never thinkest it too often to relieve us; so, may I, and all mankind, never think thy praises too many. *Amen. Amen.*

Dissimulation, which has more artifice and craft than discretion and true policy, does a person as much harm that would advance his reputation in the world by it, as plain dealing does him good.

Pleasures, that have in them the least appearance of cruelty, or, indeed, that are for the entertainment merely of the eyes and ears,—for instance, cock-fighting, and throwing at them,—are so far from deserving commendation, that they ought rather to be restrained than encouraged.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

If I were to imagine that there is in fasting, or in austerities of any other kind, a virtue to atone for past transgressions; this, I persuade myself, would not only be a foolish, but a dangerous superstition. Our great, our good Creator, hath afforded us, as free agents, the power of sining; but when we have committed iniquity, when we have transgressed and violated his most righteous laws, he hath not put it in the power of any creature to say what shall appease or satisfy

his offended justice. It is his, and not ours, both to punish and to forgive offences, committed against his Divine Majesty; and he hath told us, there is no atonement, but by the blood of his dear Son Jesus Christ:—no means of acceptance, to the grace offered by this atonement, but sincere repentance; which will go on but slowly, if I should once come to believe, that by submitting to a certain course of discipline, imposed by some, or voluntarily undertaken by myself, I should have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my own heart. I must own, religious abstinence, is a practice fit to be encouraged; and if our blessed Saviour hath not bound it upon us by an indispensable law, is it not sufficient, that he hath recommended it to us, as in its place and season expedient? I conceive it was upon these accounts that the Apostles immediately after His departure, took it up; and in the purest ages it became a part of the discipline of the Church, from whence it has been continued ever since, to set apart certain seasons and days in

the year, as times of fasting; that we Christians might not want frequent calls and admonitions, to retire from the hurry, business, and pleasures of the world, and give ourselves up to religious exercises.

By judgment men are wise: by the will they are good. Wisdom and goodness generally go together; when apart, they are not worthy of their name; for that person is not wise that does not instruct himself to be good; and he is not good whose good actions are performed, more out of custom, or superstition, than out of wisdom and knowledge.

There is nothing wounds a generous breast more, than to have the good actions it delights to be employed in, construed in an illnatured sense.

Example must be allowed, either to good or bad actions, to be a most prevailing motive, a most engaging incitement. It is natural for persons, particularly the younger class of people, to fall in with the humours and practice of those

with whom they converse, and are intimately acquainted. By bad company, how easily are people led captive to folly!—and through the propensity of nature, leading the contrary way, we do not so visibly, and so immediately as we should, manifest the fruits of a religious conversation; yet example will ever be found highly serviceable in promoting virtue in the world; indeed, it leaves a sensible influence behind, tincturing men's minds with holy meditations and with good dispositions.

Suppose a person, under censure and misreport, his words perverted, his actions scanned with spite and envy; nay, suppose him under slander, charged with what he never uttered, and actions which he did not commit—things fixed upon him which he scorns to be guilty of;—it must be owned, these, indeed, are disagreeable circumstances: I know not what circumstances, scarcely, can more dispose a serious mind to uneasiness: but yet, if such an one have the testimony of a good heart, that in Christian sincerity he has endeavoured to lead his life; though he

may be sometimes dejected, when he reflects upon the undeserved usage he meets with, and the incapacity that he fears he shall fall under of doing God that service that he is desirous of doing; yet, when he rightly considers, he will not too much disquiet himself in vain, but endeavour to refute the scandal by a good life; which, though it be slow, is a sure method of vindicating abused innocence:—this a person will do, and whatever else becomes him, referring the rest to the Providence of God, who will in his own time and method make his righteousness shine as the light, and his fair dealing as the noon-day. It was (by way here of example) thus with Joseph—he lay under the disgrace that a charge of the vilest ingratitude, the most shameless impudence, and the lewdest villany could load him with: but yet, the greatness of his mind, the clearness of his conscience, raised him so much above it, that he bore it with a generous disregard, and referred the vindication of his innocence to time and Providence.

It is impossible but that offences must be; and as long as envy, malice, pride, and ambition prevail, private persons will find their respective foes to contend with. Even Virtue cannot altogether secure men against malignity, but often exposes them to it; as our Saviour, who was the pattern of unblemished goodness, was the most despised. There always were, and always will be, some restless tempers, whom no obligations can satisfy, nor kindness win; who traduce actions commendable, and, like Saul, grudge David those conquests which he gains in their service.

I think there is no condition in life, in which Providence has placed people, but what they may improve to their real advantage, if it be not their own fault.

Every person ought to endeavour to be as skilful as possible in his business, that he may live in the world and be a useful member of society. There are some Sciences, which, though particularly by some professed, yet belong to all, and respect the profession of man as he is man.

For God hath created and placed us in the world, in order that we may learn these particulars, *viz.*, how the world was made,—what the world doth,—and what we ought to do in the world. How the world is made, we learn by Natural Philosophy, and a knowledge of the Globe: what the world does, we learn from History: what we must do in the world, we learn from Divinity and Moral Philosophy. The knowledge of these is both beneficial and delightful. To be entirely ignorant of these, is to live in the world for we don't know what. A discreet man will gather out of these what is fittest for his chief good; which is, to glorify God, live contentedly, improve in wisdom, and order his life properly.

I am of opinion that the principal motive for any person taking upon him Holy Orders, should be, a serious resolution to propagate religion and benefit the souls of men; no lucrative view of an income to indulge in indolence and sloth. He should endeavour to form the minds, correct the passions, and cultivate virtue amongst

those over whom he is placed. He should be diligent in visiting the sick and comforting the afflicted. As far as circumstances will admit, let him be liberal to the poor. Let him be such that his example may enforce his doctrine. If joined in matrimonial bands, and blessed with children, let him be a tender father, an affectionate husband. Let him be a kind pastor, a peaceful neighbour, a loyal subject, and a sociable friend. Let his enjoyments be moderate, his deportment humble; and in his conversation let him be chaste: then will he enjoy here that peace of mind which passeth understanding, and need not fear but he will hereafter be happy.

The best of us have great reason to blush if we make comparison between what we are, and what we ought to be. Though our knowledge be great, yet how much are we ignorant of that we might have known, if we had been as industrious and diligent to seek it, as our Creator and Preserver has been kind to offer it unto us! Though we have faith, love, and repentance, and

by virtue of these, sometimes shew forth the fruits of the Spirit in obedience; yet, in truth, how small time have we spent, how softly have we travelled, how little ground have we got in the way that leads to Eternal Life! In the ways of vice and wickedness, men begin the race very soon: they run swiftly; but, alas! they retire from them but very slowly.

Through partiality I would by no means assert any thing, or, in my opinion be positive; but there is one thing, which, I think, has done some mischief in the world,—hath made persons lazy and secure, and hath given occasion to that prevailing religion without virtue amongst us, and that is this principle,—"That persons are converted, as it is called, by those operations of God's Holy Spirit, wherein they are wholly passive; so that it is in vain to strive to make themselves pure, as they must do, for the attainment of any other accomplishment; since, say they, habits of goodness are supernaturally infused into us." But I cannot but look upon this as

rather idle discourse; for the Spirit of God, I am of opinion, does not now-a-days work but agreeably to reason; assisting us, whilst we sincerely use such means as Christianity teaches, and reason prescribes. So, that the only way to return, after a vicious course of living, to a proper, good, and Christian disposition, in fact is the same by which persons recover health, after an irksome illness, *viz.*, by the Almighty's blessing upon the diligent use of fit means; and any other method is no more to be expected now than Prophecy or Miracles.

The true perfections of a woman depend upon herself. Beauty, deportment, and all outward perfections, lose their lustre without those of the mind. The greatest honours that a lady can enjoy, will be but little ornament, if virtue be wanting and add not its superior lustre. All prudent men abhor a vicious woman, and with reason; for vice, in a female, beyond expression almost, is odious; and, on the reverse, a virtuous woman attracts the admiration of all.

Virtue not only raises to perfection every thing good she is possessed of, but renders her defects supportable. Happy, then, is he who possesses this treasure! But in this age, alas! difficult to be found; for it is too true, that such are too little in fashion.

Ministers are the lights of the world, and shine by a borrowed light from thee, O God! Being to guide others, may they not themselves be blind! They are to teach the ignorant, to satisfy the doubtful, and to convert the sinner: may they, therefore, be skilled in learning; but particularly in that which is the truest knowledge, *viz.*, The understanding of thy Word. Learning, in a Clergyman, without this, is useless; and, if he understands this, he is thoroughly furnished for every good work belonging to his office. And that mine, and the knowledge of those, who may be ordained to any Holy Office, may give light to others, I humbly entreat thee, O Lord! And that we may, both by our living and preaching, set forth thy

true and lively Word, and shew it accordingly. *Amen.*

It is mine, and every honest person's concern and business, to look down with contempt on views of interest, whenever they come in competition with views of duty.

If men's endeavours cannot prevent a fault, let their timely repentance atone for it. With the same height of desire that men have sinned, with the like depth of sorrow let them repent. If we have sinned to-day, do not let us defer our repentance till to-morrow; for He (God) who hath promised pardon to our repentance, hath not promised life till we do repent.

I look upon Gratitude as a chief principle in our nature. We should ever acknowledge benefits received, and be ready, when it is in our power, to requite them. When any person acts contrary to this, it is monstrous, and his behaviour should be universally detested. It is a very frivolous pleasure to be the admiration of gaping crowds; but to have the approbation of a good

man, in the cool reflections of his closet, is a gratification worthy a great mind. The applause of the crowd makes the head giddy, but the attestation of a reasonable man makes the heart glad.

PRAYER.

May all see, and fear, and put their trust in the Lord! Great are his wonderful works which he hath done, and his thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order, none can duly order them unto him. If we would declare and speak of them—they are more than can be numbered. But let us ever delight to do his will: let his law be written on our hearts. Let the ministers of his Gospel preach his righteousness before the congregation: let them not refrain their lips, for whenever they do so, the Lord himself knoweth it. Let us not hide thy goodness, O Lord, within our hearts! but let us declare thy faithfulness, and the salvation wrought for all mankind, through the merits of thy Son, Jesus Christ. Let us not conceal thy loving-kindness, and thy truth from the

people, lest thou withhold thy tender mercies from us. Innumerable evils compass us about: our iniquities have taken hold upon us; so that we are scarcely able, or worthy, to look up to thee, O Lord: they are more in number then the hairs of our head; therefore our hearts are ready to fail us. If we are virtuous, thou, Lord, wilt not forsake us, but deliver, and make haste to help us. May all of us, then, seek the Lord, and be joyful and glad in him, and let such as love to be saved, say, always, the Lord be praised. I am poor and needy, yet dost thou, O Lord, think upon me! Thou art my helper and deliverer, make no long tarrying, O my God! *Amen. Amen.*

PRAYER.

Grant, O Lord! that, as I so call thee, I may always perform the things which thou commandest. May pride never reign in my breast, nor may I ever desire delicately to live, or gorgeously to be apparelled; but may I love and serve thee, because thou forbearest, and forgivest

much. I pray for those who shew mercy—that I may go and do always likewise. We are oft encumbered with business—careful, and troubled about many things; but, may thou teach and incline me to choose the good part, that I may regard the one thing necessary, even the salvation of my soul. This I beg of thy mercy, through the merits, and for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER III.

THAT person is rich enough that does not want the necessaries of life. He is great enough, who is master of himself:—and he is happy enough, that lives and dies well.

When we observe the lame, crooked, decrepid, or persons who labour under diseases of any kind, do not let us laugh at them; but it should move our compassion:—and, in a more particular manner, let us praise the Lord for his goodness, in that he hath formed *us* in a proper mould, and guarded *us* from those evils.

Persons should read the Scriptures, that they may either inform their judgments, correct some errors in life, or be stirred up to some holy duty; as Daniel* received some comfort concerning the deliverance of God's people out of captivity, by reading the Prophecy of Jeremiah. If every one who takes God's Book in his hand, made this

*Daniel, chap. ix.

the end of his reading, the Scriptures would not be turned over so often in vain, as, I fear, by some they are.—Some will not consult with them at all: some look into them but of curiosity, not to increase in true knowledge: and some, out of a corrupt mind, wrest them to confirm their errors;—but the true reading of them is, in order, thereby, to be edified.

It would be a very good thing, if every individual would be particularly cautious not to swear wickedly, in their conversation, by the great God that made the heavens and the earth, and all things contained in them:—for let us be well assured, that it is a very great crime; and that a person cannot dishonour, or more highly offend his Creator, than by taking his Holy Name in vain.

Prosperity, too often, causes persons to cast off the fear of God, entangles their mind in vanity, blinds them in pleasure, and overwhelms them in vice and wretchedness. For whilst men thrive too fast in the world, they are apt to turn

their backs upon Heaven: whereas, afflictions and poverty are frequently the dispensations of Providence, and his blessings, to fit men for repentance, inclining their minds more to true devotion: for the afflicted chiefly have God both in their minds and in their mouths.

I grant, that young persons should see the world, and be acquainted with it; since they are designed to live in it, should become its ornament, and contribute their share to the general happiness; but yet, I think they should not be introduced into it too soon, till they are capable of forming a right and proper judgment of it. It is usually a scene of illusion—if they be not prepared against it, they will run into mistakes, and it may cost trouble to set them right again. I would have them, as soon as possible, inspired with an admiration of the tranquillity of a domestic life, with a love for those pleasures that are to be met with under a parent's roof, and with an imitation of those good examples, which they ought to find there, and with an inclination for

those employments which are suitable to their years. And let us be assured, this is the best preparation for receiving the rules of a good education.

A good man will scorn to commit an action, at which his family must blush, when he is in the grave. But, on the contrary, nothing gives him more delightful pleasure, than to think that his virtues will be an honour to his descendants.

Mediocrity, is usually more valuable than great abundance; because ***multis eget, qui multa habet:*** the foot, observes an ancient author, should give proportion to the shoe, and the necessities of the body rule our possessions: what goes beyond that measure, is rather a hindrance than conveniency. Too long, and too weighty garments, only serve to trouble and load people: a fifth wheel to a chariot, or a third eye to a face, would only disfigure the one, and make the other move with greater uneasiness. But, how happy is he who is able to say, in the midst of a well-stored market, ***quam multis non indigeo!***

Those persons who make the worst use of their time, usually complain most of its shortness: I mean such persons as consume it chiefly in dressing, feasting, or idle talking—in contriving what they should do, and for the most part do little or nothing: these, I say, want it most for their business and for their amusement. On the reverse, those persons who make the properest use of it, have generally some to spare.

When I rebuke you, for not performing properly your duty to God, (I mean, your not more frequently attending upon the service of the Church,) you say, "The hurry of business will not suffer you to attend so frequently as you wish to do." But I must reply, in answer to this, That as he, who, to serve his God, as he pretends, neglects his proper calling, is a religious truant; so, he who to attend his calling, neglects to serve his God, is a profane drudge; but for a careful person, and a religious one too, it is not at all difficult to keep his business and his religion so apart, as that they may not clash and interfere

with each other. He may discharge whatever his calling exacts, and yet have time enough to perform all that his religion requires.

Upon a little thought and examination, we shall perceive and find, that the Gospel has prescribed instances of moral duty, which our reason readily approves of, being thus revealed, and sees to be expedient; and which, our faculties, without such a revelation, would not have perceived at all, or if they had, it would have been but darkly and imperfectly.

Preachers, if they mean to instil goodness into the minds of their hearers by their doctrine, must win them by their conversation too, in simplicity and sincerity. St. Paul, being to gain the Philippians to Christ, does it not by words alone, by arguments of logic, or by persuasions, to convince the understanding of the truth of what he taught; but he demonstrates to them how they should live, saying, "Walk, as ye have me for an example." I shew you, that which I teach is possible, by my practice: I shew to all how I

carry myself: my conversation hath been in simplicity and sincerity. Those, whom I would convert by my doctrine, I labour by my conversation to gain. So that Clergymen, here, have a particular direction how to behave—how to carry themselves. They must not only produce arguments to convince the judgments of their hearers, but let them see that the things they speak are possible things, of which themselves are persuaded. Pressing others to goodness, if they be not good themselves, will be, I fear, of small signification towards persuading them of the truth of what they speak; they will *think it not* possible; for then, say they, 'they would act it themselves.' But when persons behold their Ministers go before them, and demonstrate to their eyes how they should carry themselves, this is the method to teach them to be sound Christians indeed.

My refusal to comply with your request, when you desired my "Opinion of Greatness," would be a breach of civility, if not of friendship

too; though I cannot imagine that I am qualified to answer your expectation, or flatter myself that I shall satisfy your desires; yet, under the cloak of your candour, I pen as follows:—Greatness, then, *consists* not *in* pageantry, pomp, or retinue; and, notwithstanding a person of quality may make use of these to avoid singularity, and to remind those in a lower station of their obedience to authority, yet, his good sense points out to him, that he is not the greater for them,—knowing, that there are those in the world who have neither honesty nor understanding, yet have often *all this furniture* about them. To be Great, too, is not to be stiff, formal, or supercilious, swearing at servants, or brow-beating of inferiors; because, such a behaviour appears too much as if a person was conscious of his own insignificancy, and that he had nothing but out-side, noise, and ill-humour, to make himself considerable with. But, he who is truly Great, has different sentiments, and turns his figure quite another way. He does not delight to abridge the liberties,

depress the minds, or impair the satisfaction of mankind; his greatness is easy, obliging, and agreeable; so, that no person has cause to wish it less; and though he has a general kindness for men, though he does not despise the meanest, but is desirous of standing fair in the eyes of the world, yet he never basely courts any man's favour, or strikes in with a popular mistake. No! he is sensible, that it is the part of true greatness to adhere to a proper choice, not to be overrun with noise, or numbers, but to appear in defence of injured right and neglected truth, notwithstanding the censure or disadvantage he may sometimes lie under for it. In short, a great man, in his conversation will be affable,—in his temper, generous,—and in his resolutions, steadfast. As prosperity does not make him imperious, so, neither will adversity deject him. If he shews more spirit, at sometimes, than usual, it is because of ill-treatment. He is removed from the extremes of servility or pride, and as he would not trample upon a worm, so, he scorns to sneak to an Emperor.

A genteel gaiety, mixed with some gravity, is very endearing to society.

Attentively to hear, and properly to reply, are perfections which every person should endeavour *to be* master of, that he may be qualified for conversation.

There are some, who, when their vices leave them, flatter themselves with the apprehension and belief, that they quit their vices.

Those usual invectives, used by some of the adversaries (in the pulpit,) against the doctrine and Clergy of the Church of England, may frequently produce an effect upon the ignorant and common sort of people, whose ears are more open to rhetoric than logic; 'but I do not think they can confirm the faith of wiser believers, who are aware and know, that a good cause does not need to be patronised by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute.

The uneven glass of prejudice, when placed before some men's eyes, too frequently misrepresents that which is amiable, as if it were deformed,

Our blessed Saviour has informed us, that "For every idle word, men shall give an account in the day of judgment." St. Paul says, "There will be a day in the which God will judge the secrets of all men, by Jesus Christ." These, properly reflected upon, are, and ought to be cautions to us to be watchful over our hearts and tongues, that they rob us not of the fruit of our hope. Unchaste thoughts and loose desires, are the beginnings of lewd and impure actions; and if they are conceived in the heart, they will soon be born into the world, and grow up to the full stature of vice. To secure the heart is the ground-work, therefore, of virtue; it is almost the one thing necessary; and it is that which will render both our prayers and our praises acceptable to the Most High. The best of men have their failings; and a honest Christian may be a weak one; but, weak as he may be, the sincerity of his heart will entitle him to put up this petition, which no deceiver or hypocrite can ever justly or properly make use of;—"Let the words

of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord! my strength and my Redeemer."

Marriage does not by any means divert from generous undertakings, but rather animates to good actions. To maintain a family, should not make men timorous and fearful, but considerate; because it does not restrain courage, but only rashness. A careful concern must provoke and encourage us, when we have a wife and children for our beholders, who must either partake of our glory, or blush at our ill-doing. When parents take so much pains to heap up wealth for their offspring, why should they not have the same caution to acquire Glory for them? And why should not this care for their posterity, as well make men courageous as covetous? Some say, marriage is an enemy to their peace, but what an unreasonable assertion is this; for it is not a persecution, but a comfort. If people must renounce it because it has sometimes proved unhappy; tell me,—may they not as well quit life

because it is attended with disorders? But, my friend! I would only ask this question: Can there be a greater satisfaction, than to have a faithful person, to whom we may freely discover every joy, every sorrow—to whom we may trust every private thought? No, there cannot. Then, where shall we find this advantage more complete, than amongst those united by the most sacred alliance? Sure, this must encrease the good—this must lessen the evils of life!

The Methodists, to me, seem to be such men, that, when they deal in controversy, delight in reproaches. They abound, tossing stupidity amongst mankind. In matters of sacred importance, they deal out their anathemas upon Christians, in all probability, better than themselves. They denounce damnation upon their neighbours without justice, and too often without mercy. When they denounce sentences of Divine anger against men, they add their own human indignation; and there is danger, if not timely, and by proper methods suppressed, but they may grow up to be persecutors.

Whoever of you, my sons, design to serve in the Church, I pray you, dive to the bottom of Divinity.—Whoever, of you, intend for the Long Robe, let him pry into worm-eaten laws, and superannuated customs.—And, whoever may enter into the Army, let him cut his way into military knowledge.

It is exceedingly strange and amazing, that some people will not exercise their understandings as they do their bodies; and take as much pains and labour for the acquirement of knowledge, as they do for trifling pleasure and amusements.

Ingratitude is a very detestable crime; it renders a person despised; for all abominate an ungrateful man. Of this vice, the very beasts are not guilty; since they express their kindness towards their benefactors. It is an injustice done to our neighbour, for it deprives him of that honour which is due. Nay, it is prejudicial to the ungrateful person himself:—is he in prosperity? He is looked upon as unworthy of his happiness:

is he in distress? No person pities him, because, by his ingratitude, he has stopped the current of others' liberality towards him.

MEDITATION ON CONFIRMATION.

No person shall be admitted to the Holy Communion, as it is ordained by our Church, "till he is confirmed, or ready and desirous to be so." Confirmation is a rite, whereby our Baptismal Covenant, entered into in our infancy, is renewed, when we come to years of discretion; accompanied with the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, and with prayer. It is called Confirmation, 1st, on account of the part which the Bishop bears in it; by the laying of whose hands, on the persons whom he confirms, together with the congregation, they may hope to be strengthened with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and defended with God's heavenly grace, that they may continue his for ever; which may be reckoned a confirming of them in their Christian profession. And, as they are, likewise, by this sign, certified of God's favour and gracious

goodness towards them, this is, moreover, an assurance to them of the privileges of their baptism. 2ndly, From that part the persons confirmed bear in it themselves: for hereby they do, with their own voice and consent, openly ratify the solemn promise and vow, made in their name, at their baptism; acknowledging themselves bound to believe, and do all those things which their Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for them. So that this ordinance is not to be looked upon as merely an act of the Bishop, conveying his blessing, in which they have nothing to do but to receive it, (as some inconsiderately do) but it must be considered as their own act, whereby they, by their own choice, take upon them their Baptismal Vow, and lay themselves under stricter obligations to perform it: the end for which this rite was instituted, being, to make us, who were baptized in our infancy, more sensible of the obligations we are under, to believe and do what was then promised for us. To those who have a proper sense of

this Holy Ordinance, and discharge their duty accordingly, it undoubtedly conveys great blessings. But, in order to be partakers of these benefits, let young persons be prepared and instructed in the nature of their duty in this respect. Next to their natural parents, they who are more immediately in duty bound to see that young persons, when arrived at a proper age, be confirmed, are their Godfathers and Godmothers, who had it in charge when they answered for them at their baptism. It is too much a custom, for some to press to be confirmed, who have received Confirmation several times, perhaps, before; but this proceeds from inconsideration. As there is but one Baptism, so there is required but one solemn ratification of it. No Christian, therefore, need, and let none desire to be confirmed more than once.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." We are to serve God with all those faculties he hath given us. Not that the love

of God is to exclude all others, but all trivial affections. Whenever the love of God, and that of the world, come in competition with each other, the former, undoubtedly, ought to take place of the latter. To love God with all our heart, *signifies*, to love him with sincerity, with an undissembled affection: not merely to do what he commands, but to do it because he commands it. To love God with all our soul, signifies, to serve him with an unreserved obedience. God is not to share a divided affection in our breast,—one divided between piety and sin; but he is to reign *unrivalled by* any darling vice: it is the same as, to have respect unto all his commands. "With all our strength," is, to put forth the active powers of the soul in loving and serving him:—it is to rouse ourselves from all supineness and listless *idleness*:—it is to quicken the springs of *action*, that heavily moved on before:—it is to do well, without being weary of well-doing:—it is to lay out our endeavours, that we may have a complete sense to discern, a sincere inclination to

embrace, and a steady resolution to hold fast what is best, and most pleasing to God Almighty.

LADY DAY.

The Church of England usually terms this feast "Our Lady's Day;" but herein we do not (as the Papists) ascribe unto the Virgin any Divine honour, making her our Lady, as God is our Lord. It is a civil use, not a religious office; for, in a holy sense, to speak properly, "There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." The Virgin, then, is stiled, "Our Lady," because she was, as Elizabeth calls her, "The mother of our Lord."

What a happiness would be diffused through the world, if mankind would endeavour, as much as lies in their power, to preserve a proper sense of God in their minds; always to reverence him, to value his favour more than life, and to dread his displeasure as the greatest of evils.

I cannot but apprehend, the reason why some fear to die, is, because they have not behaved themselves as they ought to have done, or lived in proper obedience to the Almighty's com-

mands; whereas, they who live agreeably to his laws, are not only free from ordinary apprehensions, but death, to them, has lost its sting.

It is through God that men have been holden up ever since they were born: it is no more in our power to exist independently of our Maker, than it was in our power to exist of ourselves from eternity. The current of our being would be immediately dried up, if it were not fed with continual supplies from him, with whom is the Well of Life. This moment we might relapse into nothing if he did not uphold us. Can we, then, ever sin against him by whom we are supported, and act in opposition to his will to whom we are indebted that we can act at all, without being guilty of too much baseness? No! But, if we expect to be upheld by him who created us, let us endeavour to avoid iniquity, and, as much as it is in our power, to walk in the commandments of the Lord blameless.

It is not riches, greatness, or any worldly enjoyments, that can render our minds easy, or

our lives totally happy; but we are happy indeed, when we are holy,—when we are sincere and upright, patient and just,—and, above all, when mercy rejoiceth over justice,—when we are kind, good, and tender-hearted towards each other, as God is towards us all,—when we forbear and forgive;—in short, when we love one another as God himself loves us, and hath testified that love in that he sent his only-begotten Son to be a sacrifice for man's transgressions.

FOR A SAINT DAY.

As God commanded sacrifices, of which he had no need, so he hath commanded prayer; both for this reason,—because men had need of them, to be as memorials of his governing Providence, and to keep alive that faith and dependance on Him necessary to their well being. In proportion, then, as men neglect to pray, they grow more loose and careless in their general behaviour; for, through want of their prayers to consider, the mind steals away, insensibly, from the Creator to the creature.

EASTER DAY.

Let us remember, that "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead." He who remembers this as he ought, cannot want a defence and caution against temptation, nor an incentive or encouragement to virtue and religion. There is no occasion to prove Job's assertion,—"Man is born to trouble," to be true; complainers save the labour. It will be better to inquire, What remedy the Almighty hath provided for grief?—What comfort for affliction?—What recompence can a man make to himself for the troubles he endures? I shall not stand to shew the insufficiency of human means; a due remembrance that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, is the best expedient. It not only cleanses, but heals us. To meditate upon our Saviour's and our own resurrection too, at the Last Day, affords consolation, as well as makes holy and virtuous. And, truly, there is no state of life, so uncomfortable, which this reflection may not be sufficient to sweeten.

PRAYER.

Almighty God! who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification; grant me, so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that I may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth. It is my duty, that at all times, in all places, and upon all occasions, I should give thanks unto thee, O Lord! But particularly I am obliged to praise thee, for the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the very Lamb which was offered for us: he hath suffered for the transgressions of the world: by his death is taken away the sting of death; but, by his rising to life again, he hath restored us to Life Everlasting. Therefore, with Angels, and Arch-angels, and with all the company of Heaven, I magnify thy glorious Name, praising thee, and evermore, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory! Glory be to Thee, O God, Most High. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER IV.

A constant pursuit of virtue, without regard to present danger or advantage; a reference of every action to the Divine Will; an habitual appeal to everlasting justice; and an elevation of soul to the reward which only perseverance can obtain, ought to be the excellence at which we should endeavour to arrive. But that course which some boast of and allow, to regulate their measures, has nothing nobler in view than the approbation, perhaps, of men, whose superiority we are not compelled to acknowledge, and who, when with assiduity we have courted them, cannot bestow any permanent reward. They ignorantly judge of what they do not understand, or partially determine what, perchance, they have never examined; consequently, their sentence is of little or no weight, till ratified by our own mind.

A guilty conscience, whilst a Clergyman is preaching, thinks and falsely imagines, that he aims at him in particular, and intends to disgrace him; he thinks he commits a trespass by treading upon his ground, and coming so close to his conscience. It greatly troubled Herod, when John the Baptist touched about Herodias; but we may observe, those who most storm at reproof, usually most deserve and want it.

It has been observed, that strange things may be done, by no diviner cause than strong fancy, impregnated by heated melancholy; for this warms the brain to a pitch that makes it full of odd thoughts, and unexpected suggestions, which are frequently taken for the more immediate actings of the Holy Spirit. And those thoughts, by the assistance of self-love and pride, may work so much upon the affections, and they so far upon the body, as to cast it into raptures; where every dream will be taken for a prophecy, and every image of fancy for a vision.

Let men govern their thoughts, for if they do not, they will gain a mastery over them; or, to speak more properly, will leave them without any true government of themselves. They are movers that need no winding up, but are incessant in their motions towards good or evil. If, therefore, we are heedless in determining them to proper objects, they will run out into any that come in their way. They will haunt and attend us at our table, closet, and bed; they will be perpetually interrupting us in our duty; they will either intercept good motions, or confuse us in performing them; and certainly, will be most busy at the time of our religious services, when people's minds ought to be composed, and employed in meditation and prayer.

The fountain of content must always spring up in our own minds; and he who has so little knowledge of human nature, as to seek happiness barely by change of situation, or truly, by any thing but rectifying his own disposition, will

spend his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the uneasiness which he means to remove.

I am of opinion, that, in very many cases, it is much safer for persons to deny themselves what is lawful, than, by the use of their liberty, to commit what may not be expedient.

A licentiousness in belief, is as blamable as a libertine practice; but yet, the too common method, by some proposed, in order to obtain a sound faith, by reading the disputants of contrary opinions, should not be encouraged; such searchers seldom find the truth:—for books of controversy, serve, for the most part, only to disturb the mind. But yet, nothing is more irrational, than for persons to pass away their lives without determining themselves some way or other, in points that are of importance. Indeed, there are some things from which we may withhold our assent; but, in cases by which our conversation is to be regulated, it is absurdity to be unsettled. Let us close to that side, which, to our judgment, appears the safest and most

probable. I do not condemn all controversial writings; it is necessary that error should be opposed and confuted. But, let the Word of God be the rule of our faith, and the standard by which we try all other religious writings whatever.

The best method that persons can use to treat envy, injuries, or any affronts whatever, is, to despise them.

There is, I think, a material difference between these two motives for War, *viz.*, The enlargement of dominion, and the defence of rightful possessions. When an invasion is to be repelled, the contest is to be supported to the utmost. Not so for the objects of ambition:—men will indeed attempt to gratify this passion, if permitted; but, if opposed, we cannot charge the opposition as injurious.

The odiousness and heinousness of the crime of lewdness and uncleanness, may appear to him, who considers how strictly God has forbidden it in his Holy Word, and how severely he has

declared his displeasure against it. But he who is not awed by the declared will of his Creator, I know not what will awe him. It is in vain to think to convince a person of the evil or danger of any sin by other arguments, whom the express Word and declared Will of God cannot convince.

We naturally determine things from their relation to ourselves, or our particular interests. When I see persons, then, suffering under troubles, or sinking under misfortunes, the fear of the like, with which I know that human nature is invested, seizes upon me; and, from a secret impulse of self-love, I find myself sensibly affected with the distresses of others.

He who can do whatsoever he will, is in very great danger of doing, too frequently, what he ought not.

The want of a disinterested regard to justice, we may perceive to be a great cause of our disorders, and the origin of our calamities.

Truth should always be placed in the clearest light. Virtue is in itself so good, that it does not

require any false paint to set it off. Vice is so odious, that it can never appear so deformed, as when set forth in its proper colours. Any undue sublime, then, in preaching, in such descriptions, I think, can do but little good.

What goodness can there be in the world without moderation; whether in the use of those things which God hath given us, or in our own disposition and carriage? Without moderation, justice is no other but rigour,—love, frenzy,—sorrow, mopishness,—joy, wildness. Without this, mercy is remissness,—pleasure, sensuality,—knowledge, curiosity,—care, distraction: without this, courage is rashness,—and even piety, superstition. In short, there can be nothing without moderation, but folly and confusion.

I have sometimes observed persons, who have tried to turn Religion into raillery, and have endeavoured to confute it by jests:—but I was always of opinion, and thought, that, by acting in this manner, they did not make Religion, but themselves ridiculous.

Let us feed the poor, often at our door, sometimes at our table. Whatever we give to our Saviour, in his members, one day he will recompence us for in our persons; and there is no person but must think it just, if the Almighty deny men their daily bread, when they daily deny *him* the crumbs.

Of all earthly enjoyments that we can have, Health is the chiefest, because it sweetens every thing besides. For, what pleasure is to be taken in wealth,—in rich apparel,—in the most stately edifices,—in sumptuous and delicate living,—in music, or, in short, in any thing without this? Sure it is, nothing is so precious in the world, nor any thing more desirable. Without it, other things are of little worth. Pleasures will be but torments, whilst they are thought of, but cannot be enjoyed:—gold, diamonds, or other valuables, are but troublesome whilst they cannot ease:—honours and titles, ill suit with an infirm body, confined, perhaps, to a bed, or imprisoned in the narrow confines of a chamber. Beauty is

changed into deformity, and length of days, without it, but a protraction of misery. In a word, it is Health, and that alone, which sweetens every thing in life, and renders all things amiable.

I look upon nothing, scarcely, more inglorious, than a Gentleman only by name; who is ignorant with respect to his mind, and who is immoral *with* regard to his life.

Whoever gives himself to reading, ought rather to consult the improvement of his mind, than the gratifying of his ear.

SACRAMENT.

"*This, do,* in remembrance of me." When persons have been confirmed, they ought to be led on, if possible, before the impressions of it are much weakened, to the Holy Sacrament. The *small* proportion of communicants, which Clergymen frequently find in many congregations, must be a subject of great concern; (as this ordinance is appointed for all Christians, and for a standing means of grace to all,) though it is

too true that the generality of people, and perhaps the lower sort beyond others, are obstinate in their prejudices, especially in those that favour corrupt nature. Yet, for Clergymen to complain of these prejudices is not enough; but to labour to overcome them is their business. There are that imagine this Ordinance belongs only to persons of advanced years, great leisure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous affair for common people to venture upon. There are, again, who stupidly disregard it, because, say they, others who receive, are never the better; or, because their friends before them, or neighbours about them, never received it at all; or, not till such a time—Why should they? But let a Clergyman represent to such, that, whoever receives the Sacrament without benefit, it is his own fault; and how many soever omit it, either for part, or the whole of their lives, not their example, but God's Word, for Christians, is the rule. Far from being a terrible institution, it is a most gracious one; designed to be celebrated

with humility, indeed, but with comfort and with joy. The preparation it requires, is within the reach of the plainest head, and most laborious hand, provided there be an honest and pious heart. That the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themselves, need no more terrify those whom God, in his mercy, will consider as worthy, (as he certainly will every true penitent) than the punishments threatened by the law to crimes, need to make innocent persons uneasy. He, whose life unfits him for the Sacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of Heaven. He, who, being qualified, neglects it, neglects a command of his Saviour, who intended it for the greatest good to him. But, for the more easy removal or prevention of objection, let me ask, or rather let me desire every one to ask himself, a few questions:—1st., When God calls, whether it be fit for you, for me, or for any of us to say, 'We are not ready!'—When he commandeth us to 'Do this,' whether it will suffice for us to reply 'We cannot do it as we ought, therefore, we will

not do it at all!' Let me put a plain case to you, pray, consider it:—You are the master of a family,—you command one of your servants to do this,—he answers, he cannot do it to please you;—he will not, therefore, go about to do it at all.—You command another to do the same thing,—he replies, He cannot do it so well as he should, but, in obedience to your command, he will do it as well as he can, and he hopes that you will be pleased with his endeavours. Which of these two will you account the most acceptable servant? I do not question but you would prefer the latter. This is precisely your case. God commands you to 'do this.' Though you cannot do it so well as you should, yet do it as well as you can. By doing so, you obey the command of God, who knows our infirmities, and, instead of punishing them, will pity them; unless they are notorious and wilful breaches of his Laws. Though God expects all that we can do for him, yet he expects no more than we can do for him. And, "If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to

what a man hath, not according to what he hath not."* 2ndly, Whether it be not a thing certain, that you, and I, and all men must die? If so, whether we shall not be then called to an account for the doing or not doing of this duty? "There is an appointed time for all men once to die,—after that the Judgment;"† at which time, "all must receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."‡ 3rdly, Whether any of us know the time when we must die? If not, it may be this as well as the succeeding moment; and *if we be not fit to receive the Sacrament, we are not fit to die*; and if we be taken in the act of disobedience to a known command, what can we expect but a fearful looking for of judgment and indignation to devour us? 4thly, What is the reason that we are not prepared for this? Is the fault in God, or in Christ? No! They kindly invite and command us to do our duty: *this* in particular.—Is it in the Sacrament itself? No!

*2 Cor. viii. 12. †Heb. ix. 27. ‡2 Cor. v. 10.

This is ready prepared for us.—Is it in the ministers, who are employed about these holy things? No! In the name of God and Christ they earnestly entreat us, and are ready to deliver the *same* unto us. If, then, we are unfit, the fault must be in ourselves; and, what is this but to double our guilt by doubling our crime? *viz.*, by disobeying the command of God, and persevering in so doing to contract a greater guilt. When you have asked yourself these questions, and considered what answer is to be given to them, be advised seriously to think, whether this plea of unpreparedness, will stand in any stead at the last day? When that great day of the Lord shall come, (as none of us knows how soon it may) when the books shall be opened, and the consciences of all displayed, then may you wish (when it is too late) that you had been more careful,—more conscientious in the discharge of your duty,—more complying with God and Christ in the observation of their commands.—Then you may wish you had your life to bring over again,

and that you had once more those opportunities offered, which you have so often slighted.—Then you may wish that you were but once more invited, once more admitted to feast with God and Christ: *how would* you then improve the opportunity! You would certainly stir yourself, that every moment would be a step towards happiness. Consider this, then, whilst you have time: neglect not your present opportunities; remember opportunity is not easily retrieved, after it has passed by us. But let it be your care, whilst it is called to-day, so to improve every occasion offered, that when God shall call, you may be ready to go and take possession of that eternal inheritance prepared for the faithful, in Heaven.

It is well if it is not found too favourite a point with some, that persons are not accountable for their opinions; but it is very absurd to think so, for why are men accountable for their actions? Is it not because they are in their power? And if men's opinions are in their power, they must certainly be accountable for them.

But men's opinions, are so much, undoubtedly, in their power, as that they may use or neglect means which are necessary to qualify men to judge well. The consequence of which is, those who speak against Religion, founded upon opinions and notions, hastily taken up, offend against God and society, and become more or less responsible for every ill effect which they have upon weak unstable minds.

Wheresoever Virtue resides, it deserves more ample commendation than fortune can lay claim to; because Virtue refuseth none, but may be by every one embraced. She dwells in the homely Peasant's cot, as well as in the Prince's stately palace; and we often find the sun-burnt Peasant adorned with russet honesty, when the gaudy Lord is so vicious, that he is a stranger to probity. —But, *Nobilitas sola est, atque unica virtus.*

Some, in company, are for ever talking and chattering; but it does not become any person in conversation to make too great a profusion of their knowledge, lest their treasury be too soon

exhausted:—something should be preserved in store, that they may afterwards appear with; for, let us observe, The skilful fowler seldom throws more meat to the birds, than is necessary to catch them.

A good man should instruct by his example, as well as by his discourse. When the Almighty tries his servants with extraordinary sufferings, he supplies them with a proportionable assistance for their support. The light of the Gospel, though fitted to conduct us in the paths of happiness, yet will encrease our condemnation, if we do not govern our lives by its precepts. Men ought to be mighty thankful to God, for having instructed his Church with the heavenly doctrine of St. Mark; and to shew their grateful sense of this valuable treasure, by frequently and attentively reading his Gospel; firmly believing those things which he relates, that they may reap those advantages God designed them in that revelation of his Holy Will.

I cannot, in my own opinion, totally condemn

the custom, now and then, of playing at cards, for little sums, and in those whose incomes and turn of mind receive no hurt or damage from what they happen to lose; but, I look upon it as an innocent amusement, calculated, in some measure, to prevent scandal and defamation, both in public and private companies; and, which often gives those persons something to do, who, otherwise, have little if any thing to say.

I have frequently thought what it is that causes so many young men to go into the army, and become soldiers; a profession which must necessarily expose them to dangers, and in which they must undergo both toil and hardship:—Is it from an inclination of serving their King and country? It is well if this is not the least in their imagiuations. But it seems to me to be, because they cannot lead a regular life, and are willing to shun that exercise which their condition obliges them to; or, because they delight in what they see of licentiousness in the lives of some soldiers. But this is all delusion, which, flatter-

ing by false hopes, and shewing them the evils they would avoid, conceals from them those to which they lay themselves open.

To be governed by Religion, is, to be governed by God, whose service is perfect freedom, whose laws are nothing more than wise rules, for the perfecting our nature, and for the procuring of our happiness. What, therefore, my friends, more suitable—what more desirable, than for you, for me, and for all men, cheerfully to conform to the Almighty's will, and to endeavour to walk in the way of his commandments, as blameless as possible.

I am of opinion, he is the true possessor of a thing who enjoys it, not he who owns it without the enjoyment of it. All I desire, then, here, is, the use of things, let who will have the keeping of them; but, with this consideration, too, not to be a prey to my own cares, not any ways to envy others their possessions.

I lay this down for an observation, worthy the attention of my dear children, as well as all

others, in their passage through life,—"That a contract, whispered in the ear, ought to be as binding upon a person's conscience, as if the same engagement was repeated in the presence of never so many witnesses, or executed even under the formality of Law."

One of the first and most necessary things, in the way of a Christian to Heaven, is, to be instructed in all those divine points and morals, which God thought proper to reveal, and make articles of man's salvation. If he must at last be judged by them, it is necessary that he set himself, in the mean time, carefully to observe them; and if he must observe them, he must first know them, and have them made familiar to his mind, so that he may be reminded of them, as often as opportunities occur either to keep or break them. This knowledge of every duty, which is to be matter of our future account, as it is of necessity and singular advantage, so will it cost some pains to attain to it; yet I know not how any sincerely pious minds can employ themselves better. Let

them read such books where their duty is particularly recited and explained, and the necessity of their observance of such duties is shewn most particularly from the Holy Scriptures. Let persons read these often and attentively, till they have made themselves masters of them, and their consciences are ready, upon any occasion, to remind them thereof, as they are called to observe them in the course of their lives and conversation; and when their consciences do thus remind them of any, let them by no means take off their eye from what their conscience tells them is a matter of their final account, and, instead of it, follow the practice of others, it may be reputed men of note, for knowledge and understanding. For, though it is a sad reflection, yet it is a true one, that numbers, and some of note for learning, seem to make little account of a great many of those duties which God has declared he will call us all to a strict account for. But having attained to a knowledge of all necessary duties, let persons stick to their knowledge and follow it without

disputing, and not think of leaving of it, to follow the too general neglect of things which they may observe in others.

A person may be ignorant of some things without blame, and the ignorance of others may deserve commendation; for, 'tis both a part of of innocence and a guard to it, to be ignorant of the ways of doing ill. It is a means of quiet, to be ignorant of other men's business, and busily inquisitive into their affairs. It is the sign of the well-employed, to be ignorant of trifles and vain things; but it is wrong for any one to be ignorant of what he professes, for this is to be at a loss in his own proper business.

So far as a man is careless and negligent, in coming to the means of knowledge, and to be reminded of good duties, so far he is insincere.

PRAYER.

I beseech thee, O Lord! of thy great goodness, to turn thy face away from mine iniquities, and to blot from thy remembrance my misdoings. Make me a clean heart and renew a right spirit

within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, nor take thy Holy Spirit from me.—But give me the comfort of thine help, and establish me with thy free Spirit: then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER V.

FROM the observation of this Festival, (*viz.*, St. Philip's and St. James's) let men learn, readily to obey every offer of Divine grace, and to prepare their minds for the reception of supernatural truth. Let them zealously endeavour to promulge that Christian knowledge to others, which the goodness of God kindly bestows upon them. This obliges ministers, with respect to their flock,—parents, to their children,—masters, to their servants,—and, indeed, all Christians, with regard to each other, boldly to profess the Truth, whenever the Providence of God calls them to give testimony to it. Under all sufferings, let persons preserve a proper frame of mind, and express their Charity for those who are the instruments of their sufferings. Let them curb their appetites in the use of lawful pleasures, that

they may be prepared to imitate these blessed Apostles in every act of self-denial.

I ever looked upon old age as meriting the greatest esteem, honour, and veneration conceivable:—Yet it will appear sometimes contemptible if it wants the ornaments of gravity, judgment, and discretion.

I can have but little security of my good name. If you ask me the reason of it, I can only reply, 'That it is in the keeping of others, more than in my own.'

Prejudices which men early imbibe and take up, are not always soon overcome.

The Christian religion is a strict religion; and if Clergymen preach it truly up, they must sometimes give their hearers strict rules to observe,—perhaps, unpleasant things to hear: even many a hard saying, ungrateful to the ear and grievous to be borne, ought to be put in practice. Is it not necessary, therefore, to encourage people, by their own strict and exact walking,—to observe what they say,—to be willing to hear with

patience, and keep conscientiously, the lessons they must often give them?

I am apt to believe, very few understanding persons ever repented that they had kept silence; but many (as well as myself) have, that they have not done so.

False reports are often raised and propagated far and wide, particularly by those whose interest it is, perhaps, that they should be believed. But I wish, sincerely, that such would consider, that misrepresentation hath often made the innocent obnoxious to ill-grounded censures. Alas! great prejudices will pervert the most innocent truths.

Though riches are what most men wish for, and desire; yet, I am of opinion, no person of solid, sound judgment, will esteem it better to be rich, than to be wise, virtuous, and religious.

The ascension of our blessed Saviour, should always remind persons, that their principal treasure is above; that we ought not, therefore, to set our affections on things which are below. Heaven is the true, chief happiness of a Christian;

and people's design, in this world, ought to be to prepare themselves for the enjoyment of it. Our endeavours ought to tend to the qualifying of ourselves to be received into our Saviour's presence, to whom we have the obligations, both of duty and gratitude. Let us subdue the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, that we may, in some-wise, make our conversation correspond to our Saviour's condition; that, where the eyes of the Apostles were forced to leave him, thither our thoughts may follow him.

PRAYER.

I beseech thee, Almighty God! that, as I do believe thy only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord to have ascended into the Heavens; so I may, in heart and mind, thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen. Amen.*

Honesty is always the nearest path to success. What an abundance of fatigue and trouble, then, must a Knave undergo! How many flou-

rishes, how many shifts, and how many tricks, must he use to compass his ends! Whereas, an honest man does his business, if I may be allowed thus to express myself, with a wet finger.

If the condition of our nature be such, that we cannot do all that we would; this should be no excuse for not performing what, with care, we might have performed. It is true, no one is absolutely perfect: but, I would ask, Whether we are capable of making any approaches towards perfection?—and whether we are not concerned to do it, notwithstanding entire perfection is unattainable by us? Certainly, there are degrees of excellency. To be abandoned is something:—to be good and virtuous, though this virtue and goodness be attended with many imperfections, is better. And, to attain to such a degree of holiness, as to fall into no gross acts of vice,—this is a state highly desirable; indeed, it is that state which the Almighty expects that we should attain to, and such as we may attain to, by that prudence we are apt to use in other concerning

affairs. I do not say the generality of persons, in truth, proceed thus far: many are too indolent; but there are who have gone thus far, and others might do so by equal care. And, if men can be prevailed with to do this, or to go so far in the doing of it, as the circumstances of their condition will admit of, we have reason to believe that a merciful God will approve such endeavours, and accept of a man according to that which he hath, not according to that he hath not.

Let thy Priests be clothed with righteousness: let thy Saints sing with joyfulness. It is a good and pleasant thing, for persons to dwell together in love and unity: it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing:—it is like the dew of Hermon, which fell upon the hill of Sion. May the Lord our God give to all this blessing! But, more particularly, may nothing befal me, (or any of mine!) unworthy the Majesty before whom I am this day to present myself. May all

things be done with reverence and godly fear!—to his glory; and with edification to my hearers. May I, and all my congregation, come, with holy hearts, and awful minds, to worship thee, O Lord! And may thou, in thy mercy, be pleased to pardon those who appear before thee, with less prepared hearts than they ought to do. *Amen. Amen.*

Some have affirmed, that "Virtue is its own reward." If we take it, without any perplexities and hardships, it carries its own recommendation; but, take it with all its difficulties,—all the sufferings with which it is often attended;—take it with the loads of contempt and reproach, that are frequently thrown upon it and then say, 'That it is its own reward,'—is little more than a piece of speculation. For, considering the inclination that human nature has to avoid all evil, a state of strict virtue, attended with great sufferings, and void of all hopes hereafter, would be looked upon as a real misery. Every one must, therefore, subscribe to the Apostle's sentiments—"If our hopes

were confined to this life only, we should be of all men the most miserable."

He who is greatly pleased, or displeased, with small things;—he who sets his heart upon matters of little importance;—he who has his will determined by trifles;—his actions seldom directed by reason;—and his passions raised by things of small moment, is truly an humourist. And, wherever this practice is suffered to prevail, it will bias the judgment to pronounce little things great, and incline men to lay a great stress upon them. In truth, this temper will incline us to pass an unjust value upon almost every thing that occurs; and every step we tread, in this path, is just so far out of our road to Wisdom.

It is impossible that any person can have taken a proper survey of himself, but he must be sensible of a great number of imperfections, which spoil the merits of his best actions. We read of Cato, as a model of human virtue; but where is he who will pretend to say, that whatever he did was purely from right intentions,

without a mixture of envy, pride, or such-like passions? Had he no weaknesses,—no oddness of humour,—no unaccountable bias in his temper and inclination which determined him? If we well consider how many actions are necessary to constitue one perfectly right, we should be soon sensible, that there is no action, much less a life that consists of so many, that does not need the mercy of God to supply its deficiencies.

I think every condition is, or may be made, in some degree, pleasing; and since there are in *all* miscarriages, it becomes a man of reflection, to be so discreet as to pass some things by unnoticed; favours and affronts being no otherwise than as men apprehend, or apply them to themselves. As it is arrogancy to be at variance with superiors,—dangerous with equals; so with inferiors it is beneath a man. We should endeavour to avoid the displeasure of all persons, even of the meanest. But, let us be civil, let us always be affable; carrying ourselves as equally as we can, between pride and familiarity; and let us be cer-

tain, that ill example lead not any to err. Such, or such a one, has given me offence; but as I had no cause to admire it, I have as little to take notice of it. May it be my care to strive to please every person;—my inferiors, if it be in my power, and *to gain* their love and esteem. I may, by this, however, avoid that malice which we must always expect from those beneath us. Let me expect the worst; I shall know how to remedy myself, let it be what it will. For, if a person should take notice of all the false sayings and absurd actions, that he hears and sees in the world, he would never be at ease. By this means a wise man would be rendered miserable, and those who are not so would be the most happy.

Books! Sweet unreproaching companions; and if they cannot bring men to enjoy life, yet they may teach them to endure it.

I am of opinion, that there are no persons, so proper to teach others their duty, nor so likely to reform the vicious, as those who make it their business themselves to practise it:—because, by

this means, they convince the world that they are in earnest, when they see that they do not persuade them to any thing, but what themselves choose to perform.

O God! who, as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit;—grant that I, thy Minister, by the same Spirit, may have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus, our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen. Amen.*

Some lose the profit and reputation of good thoughts, by the odd manner they have of expressing themselves; they affect talking mysteriously, and look upon it as a sign of wisdom not to be understood: they despise common expressions, and coin new words and phrases, thinking it an ornament to borrow from other tongues, though in all probability they might be as well if not better furnished from their own.

Reason and prudence, I hope, will ever direct and guide me, (as well as all others) that I may not give way to melancholy fears, or uncomfortable thoughts; but place things in such a light, that they may promote in me an inward complacency of mind; and that I may use all lawful means in my power to make life comfortable and easy. And I do not know by what means this can be better effected, than by the assistance which Religion affords.

There are ways, I think, to make servants obedient to the orders and commands of their masters, *without their masters* breaking those of God. Gravity, and *not* using them to hear their masters swear, are more likely methods to cause us to be obeyed than oaths can possibly be. It is but an extravagant way of teaching inferiors to pay us their duty, to teach them to disobey the commands of superiors, by example; and to lead them to despise the injunctions of the Most High, to whom, upon every consideration, we must confess, that all men owe an unfeigned obedience.

To correct persons, in violent transports of anger, is but like administering physic in the extremity of a disease: it exasperates instead of cures. When passion is weak, reprehension may suppress; but, whilst raging, it increases it.

The important and only business for man here upon earth, is, to serve his God with reverence and godly fear; and endeavour to gain for himself hereafter, eternal felicity.

Of ourselves we are frequently ignorant what may be advantageous, what may be pernicious to us. Far from being able to penetrate into the future, the present itself escapes us: so short-sighted are we in our views, that a very slight obstacle sometimes frustrates our designs. God only, to whom every thing is present, can impart to man a knowledge of the future: no other Being has power to facilitate the success of men's enterprises; and, sure it is, those who adore him with the purest affection,—those who call upon him with constancy and fidelity,—those who consult him with sincerity and resignation,—those he will guide, and those he will protect.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

It is much to be wished, that Divines would endeavour to discover to men, the way to love, rather than define the Creator; and instead of informing them of his Essence, and labouring to make them conceive the mysterious Trinity of his Persons by the unity of his nature; teach them the awful adoration of Him, whom they are not able to comprehend: and endeavour to make men forego what is dear to them in the world, that they may be united to Him, who ought to possess both our hearts and our affections.

When *Moses* was out of patience at the *Israelites' Molten Calf*; and David expressed himself with warmth against the enemies of God and goodness; and a greater than either of these is said to have looked upon the Pharisees with anger, because of the hardness of their hearts; and the apostle St. Paul directs "That men be angry and sin not, nor suffer the sun to go down upon their wrath;"—these are authorities very considerable, very strong to conclude, that when,

men are angry, upon certain accounts, and for a short space of time, and under other such regulations as this passion is capable of, neither Christianity nor Reason will condemn those resentments. In truth, let us do this passion justice, and it will appear to have somewhat more to say for itself than some others: for the most part it proceeds upon an apprehension of a received wrong, and a desire and inclination of being righted. These, no rules of living that I ever saw or heard of, have debarred men from acting in pursuance of, provided they confine themselves to proper measures, and do not seek the mischief of others by endeavouring after their own necessary and just reparation.

One of the principal arts of escaping superfluous uneasiness, is for us to free our minds from a custom of comparing our condition with that of others, upon whom the blessings of life are more amply bestowed; or, from imaginary thoughts of delight, perhaps not by man to be attained. Very few are placed in so distressful a station, but they may every day see others as much so, if not

more miserable than themselves. From hence, let us all learn to rejoice in our own lot.

As there is one end to good men, *viz.*, eternal happiness, and one author of salvation, *viz.*, Jesus Christ; so, the only way to it, is, by *doing well* and by suffering evil. 'Bear and forbear, abstain and sustain,' is a proper motto for every Christian.

It *is* certainly some degree of improvement when a person fears to be positive.

Men's vices naturally hate rebuke; but when, for want of this, they are put out of the way of thought and reflection, from bad they grow apace to being worse.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Lord! art my strength and my song, and art become my salvation. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee for all thy mercies, favours, and loving-kindness, to me and all belonging to me. May I ever serve thee with a willing mind and with a pure heart. May I ever exalt thy Holy Name, so long as it shall be thy good pleasure to continue to me my being. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VI.

With an ill grace does he punish vice who is himself a criminal. With no good countenance can he reprove immorality, who is himself immoral. They, in whose hands the execution of the Law is reposed, ought to be cautious that they be strict observers of it themselves; for, in vain does he bear the sword, who by his own transgression makes the law of none effect: but, besides, he loses the honour, the satisfaction, of reclaiming a profligate world, by the prevalency of good example; which is, to most persons, beyond argument.

A Christian should have three guides,—Truth, Charity, and Wisdom. Truth to go before him, the other two on either side. If any of these be wanting, he may deviate from the right path. Some err by following Truth without

Charity; whilst others, to clear up a mistake, have failed in their Wisdom, and offended against Justice. A charitable untruth and an uncharitable truth, with an improper management of Love, must be avoided by that person who would properly steer his course through life, and arrive at that haven of felicity where he would wish to be.

Slaves have but one master; but the ambitious have as many as there are men in the world who can be instrumental to their fortune.

I see that one affection or other, too often carries a person blindly on to such actions, as when reason is awake to consider them rightly, he would give a considerable sum they had never been done.

What a man squanders away, he takes from his heirs; what he lays up by avarice, he takes from himself. The proper medium is to do justice to ourselves and others too.

The declaration of a man's mind is the declaration of his judgment, or of his knowledge, which should be distinguished with care. If I say, 'I

believe, or think a thing is so or so,' I may speak truth; but in a matter wherein it may be presumed I am a competent judge, if I say, 'It is so, whilst I doubt, or even should believe it to be so, but do not know it, it is a falsity; for I pretend to speak, not my opinion or belief but my knowledge.

Next to our duty to God, let us be loyal to our Sovereign Lord, the King; and do not let men sell honour to purchase treason. *It* is very wrong for persons to slur the dignity of his Person; for the most effectual course to disobedience and rebellion, is, first to sully the glory of his Person, and then to overthrow his power.

He alone is master of a true stile in writing, who knows how to be plain without being low, and natural without being flat.

Men ought to have a high esteem for all the ordinances appointed by God, as means of their improvement in wisdom and grace. They should not ask, 'What profit is there in attending upon the public Prayers and Sacraments?' seeing the Almighty has appointed them, we may be assured

they are proper for us to use; though in their own apprehension they perceive no benefit at present by them. But let them reflect, that the fault is not in the seed, but in the soil; because they come not with hearts prepared, minds teachable, and with good intentions and ends.

Too exalted a prosperity, is apt, sometimes, to make men both deaf and blind. They are unwilling to persuade themselves that, that favour which is established on so seemingly solid a foundation, can ever change. But, know, vain man! if thou meanest to gain or preserve the esteem thou hast gotten, 'Make thyself less.'

O Lord! who didst endow thy holy Apostle, St. Barnabas, with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; leave me not, I beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen. Amen.*

If the great are good they should be great, and we ought to take a pleasure in their being so. But if the great cease to be good, we must not

change the nature of things, and call wrong right, and right wrong, to oblige any. It is a person's actions that give him a character; and the meanest of writers is he, who will endeavour to give others a good opinion of such measures, as are disapproved of by himself.

A good name is as precious ointment, above riches, and more than silver and gold to be regarded. It rejoices the heart, cheers the spirits, and prolongs a man's days. Let the contrary, then, be avoided. If Clergymen be ill reported of, their doctrine, though good, will be despised.—If a vessel be not sweet, who will taste of its liquor? —Men esteem the fruit agreeable, sometimes, to the tree's report. Too many of us are careless in this respect, which is one reason we preach so much but profit so little. The word will scarcely speed, if the preacher be despised. For the procuring of a good report, then, let us be diligent in the discharge of our duty, and in our vocation, avoid idleness. Let us take heed not to be justly accused of that which in others we censure. In

all our proceedings let us seek the glory of God; for they who honour him shall be honoured by him; whereas, they who seek only their own profit and honour, shall be abased. Let the people, too, take care how they detract from the credit of a Minister: it is a fault which ought to be amended. People are ever prying into, and raking up, the failings and infirmities of the Clergy; but, O Man! thou shouldest rather rather cover their faults. They are men subject to equal infirmities with thyself. Assist them in their wants if it be in thy power; and seek their dignity for thine own good. The Minister is the head of the people; let him then be respected:—and it is an expression, as ancient as the Psalms, "Do my Prophets no harm."

Love and esteem, separately considered, are incapable of producing Friendship; which is a reciprocal intercourse of civilities and endearments, whose motive was founded by that Being, who inspired the Holy One with the most expressive definition of Friendship that can be seen,—

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye unto them." Wherever self-interest is the motive, hypocrisy, not friendship, is the means made use of.

When wealth is used only to support pride, ambition, and folly; to be rich is very far from being any recommendation to honour or respect.

I cannot but look upon it as a discredit to Religion to imagine, as some superstitious Christians do, that it is an enemy to all mirth and cheerfulness, and an exactor only of pensive looks and solemn faces; that people are never serious enough, till moped into statues, or cloistered from all society, but that of their own melancholy thoughts;—that it is a Gospel duty, to be whining, or silent, or retired from the most innocent festivities;—in short, that all kind of mirth is to be ranked amongst those idle words which our Saviour says, "Shall be brought to judgment," as if Religion was an insipid affair, without life or motion, or was intended to transform us into monuments of stone; by which false conception,

they render it burthensome when it really is not: for, to make Religion forbid us what is modest, humane, or natural, is, to render it a real grievance. Since, then, to be sociable and cheerful, is as natural as to be reasonable; to make our Religion an enemy to mirth and conversation, is, to represent it as a tyrannical invader of the liberties of human nature. It is true, though it does not deny us the freedom of innocent humour, nor disallow those inoffensive railleries sometimes requisite to conversation, and what gives it a quicker relish; yet it hath taken care to bound our mirth within the necessary caution of decency; and so long as men keep within these bounds, not sallying forth in scurrilous, malicious, or profane talk and jesting, our Religion approves our cheerfulness; and so far is it from always restraining those sinews of the mind, good humour and action, that it re-collects their scattered force, and winds up their slackness to a proper harmony.

There are some who think it sufficient that they are a little more civilized, and decent in their

behaviour, than the profligate world (as they term it) about them. We find the vain-glorious Pharisee valuing himself that he was better than others; no extortioner, that he was not unjust, or lewd, as many were; yet he was far short of what he should have been; for the Publican being a sincere penitent, went home by God accepted, when the other did not. It is to be feared there are not a few, amongst ourselves, who can make but little better pretence to the Almighty's favour than the boasting Pharisee, yet entertain a conceit that they are religious enough, because only a little more decent in character than notoriously bad men. But it is proper for every person to observe this truth, 'Not to compare themselves with those who are worse, but with such as are better than themselves.' The former comparison will fill men only with pride, but the latter will shew them their defects, and teach them to improve.

Pride is very deceitful: it is the mother of many vices. A proud person never can be ex-

cellent. Seeing the Angels, by this, fell from Heaven, is it not folly to imagine that man can rise to Glory by it? Our Saviour, by his example, has taught that a humble mind is the path to a glorious state. And, it is recommended to us in Scripture, "Let this mind be in you, that was in Christ Jesus, who, being equal with God, made himself of no reputation, but was found in form of a servant."*—Rebecca leaped from her Camel, when she perceived Isaac walking;—and, indeed, every good man will cast from him the conceit of a high mind, if he properly considers, pays due attention to, and seriously reflects upon the humility of his Lord.

All persons, I verily believe, have some aim or other superior:—for instance, the ambitious man, is fond of honour and power; the luxurious, of pleasure; and the covetous delights in the increase of his wealth. But I would have all observe, and endeavour to retain in memory, too, 'That a wise and judicious man, will delight in

*Phil. ii. 5.

the increase of wisdom, and the improvement of his virtue.'

All curious searching, to know more of God than he has thought proper to reveal of himself, is both vain and hurtful to the searchers; since, by his Holy Word, and by his excellent works, he hath declared what is fit for men to know, that they may glorify him, and obtain eternal happiness for themselves. Moses, therefore, says, "The secret things belong unto the Lord, but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and our children for ever." *

Formerly, the number of Philosophers, or, indeed, those who pretended to be so, were but few; of pretended ones, the numbers, now, are great. Learning and books, were then in few hands; at present, almost every one pretends to learning. The press daily sends forth books. Men, from opinion—Wits for bread,—publish Atheism, and the vicious and half-learned read them. With these, the authority of some esteemed learned, as well as objections against doctrines,

*Deut. xx. 29.

which men's vices, and follies, induce them to wish not true, go far; and those of less knowledge and inferior rank in life, are glad to follow the opinions, as well as vices of their betters. So that, he who now a-days truly and sincerely reveres and serves his God, is as great a curiosity almost, as formerly an Atheist was.

If we search for high carriage, we shall meet with it, in general, in persons of low birth. Arrogance is a weed, that chiefly springs up in a dunghill; and it is from the rankness of the soil that she hath her height. Some, who are lifted a few steps upon fortune's ladder, observing the representment of honour above, are so eager to embrace it, that they strive to leap thither at once; but by over-reaching themselves in the way, they frequently fail of the end. This happens, not always for want of counsel, education, or example; but for want of a discerning judgment, which would inform them, if they would permit it, 'That the surest, best, and properest way, to esteem and honour, is, to go about by humility.'

The properest way for a man to understand the true nature of Charity, is to reflect upon the motions of his own heart, and observe the course of his demeanour towards himself; by this means men may be infallibly assured how they should stand affected, and how they should behave towards others. This advantage attends this rule, too, that by it they may discern the specialities of their duty, without having recourse to external instructions for it. Every one, by internal experience, knows what it is to love himself, and is conscious how he uses to treat himself; each one can decide, then, for himself, what he ought to do towards his neighbour. Men are not only taught of God, to "Love one another;" but, by themselves, how to exercise that duty. Our Saviour proposes the law of Charity in these terms, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." This we might instance in many particulars, but I shall only just observe,—Do we not seriously grieve at our own misfortunes or disappointments? Are

we not concerned when things belonging to us come to any damage? Do not pains and diseases afflict us? From hence, thoughtless man! learn both to commisserate, and when in the power of thine hand to do it, relieve the distresses, wants, or misfortunes of thy fellow-creatures.

How incomparably happy are we Christians, under a Religion the most perfective of our nature, and the most conducive to our happiness. "Blessed," saith our Saviour, "are the eyes which see the things which ye see; for I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings, have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." But in vain were these great privileges conferred upon us, if we make not a proper improvement of them; and far from blessed shall we be in the great day of account, if we do not constantly endeavour to "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from

Matt. xiii. 17.

all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

Almighty God! by whose Providence thy servant John the Baptist was born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son, our Saviour, by preaching of Repentance; make me so to follow his doctrine, and holy life, that I may truly repent according to his preaching, and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake, through the merits of Jesus Christ. *Amen. Amen.*

A course of much indulgence is apt, too frequently, to wear out the impressions of awe proper in servants; whereas, new faces quicken their diligence; and they seem, generally, more inclined to please a master, by attention to his guest, than himself.

I cannot but look upon him to be extremely happy, who, in extremity, finds a true and sincere friend; but I judge him much happier, who does not meet with that extremity whereby to try his friend.

I am not one of those who can think or imagine, that our kind and beneficent Creator, ever called any of us into being, to render us unhappy. People, by their follies, indeed, may make themselves wretched. If we suffer reason to yield to impetuous passion, ignorant of true happiness we may make our lives burthensome, and convert what is naturally good into destructive poison.

Self-love is much gratified by satire. This was one cause of P*p*e*'s popularity; and himself appears so sensible of it, as to stigmatize many inoffensive characters.

Since the amendment of our lives is the only proof that we can give of the sincerity of our repentance, how great must be the folly and danger of those, who, either in hopes of having a future opportunity to repent in, lay aside the thoughts of it at present; or, out of a boasted and presumptuous reliance upon God's mercy, and Christ's merits, imagine that a few penitential tears, shed at the time of death, will sufficiently

atone for the sins of a long life. One sort depend upon a palpable uncertainty; the other sort upon an example* so very extraordinary, that can never be the case of any other person upon earth. Let all hasten, then, to return unto the Lord their God, by an immediate, true, and sincere repentance for their past crimes, a firm and steadfast resolution of future amendment, and a life and practice conformable thereto; lest death and judgment of a sudden overtake us, and we be obliged to submit to justice, when it may be too late to apply for mercy.

SAINT PETER.

Almighty God! who, by thy Son Jesus Christ, didst give to thine Apostle St. Peter, many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock; make, I beseech thee, myself, and all Pastors and Curates, diligent in preaching thy Holy Word, and the people obedient to follow the same, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen. Amen.*

*Penitent Thief.

In the xiii. chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, verse 7th, I read these words, "Charity beareth all things;"—but, I would ask, may they not be mistranslated? For, as we read them "*beareth* all things," what difference is there between that clause and the last of this verse, *viz.*, "*Endureth* all things." Here is no difference at all. Might not the words be read, "*Covereth* all things;" for the word *stego* signifies *to cover;* it is the same word that is ordinarily used in the New Testament for that purpose: "They *uncovered* the roof of the house,"* &c. The *roof*, or *covering*, is the same word that is here used: then, "Charity *covereth* all things;" and, though men have many faults and infirmities, true Charity will cover them all.

PRAYER.

Almighty God! who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of them that are penitent; create in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins, and acknowledging my wickedness, may obtain

*Mark ii. 4.

of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen. Amen.*

"To God, only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever."*

*Rom. xvi. 27.

CHAPTER VII.

BEING convinced of the purity of Religion, as by law established in this Nation, it is not my inclination to dispute upon it; I judged it, therefore, proper, not to give a perusal to the paper you sent to me, but upon that occasion, I judge it needful the following lines to notify:—those who are truly attached to the doctrine and precepts of our Saviour, ought to unite; men should not sow the seeds of division amongst us, or encourage a sectarian spirit. As for myself, I must honestly confess, that if I knew any constituted Church in the world, that taught Religion more pure, holy, or more useful; that delivered precepts more reasonable; or which, in their consequences, tended more to the peace of society, or the benefit of individuals; that tended more to help forward virtue and morality, and to discoun-

tenance profaneness and immorality; that gave more forcible arguments for the one, and against the other; I would be a member of that Church, and use my endeavours, to bring over all whom I could, to it. But, till such can be found; nay, so long as to me it appears, that those who oppose the doctrine of the Church of England; either hold opinions destructive of, or in their tendency weakening the force of the precepts, promises, or threatenings, of the Gospel; and such as, if they do not encourage men to, I am confident furnish them with pleas for some of their crimes; in consequence, it is my duty, no less than my interest, faithfully to adhere to that Church, of which I have the happiness to be a Minister; and shall endeavour, as far as in my power, both to maintain and defend its doctrines. The keenness indeed of our divisions, I think, may be chiefly dated from the Act of Toleration. It is true, such allowances proceed from tenderness, but some of the mischiefs ensuing from it have been great, and by almost insensible degrees

may grow to too formidable a stature, and at last suck themselves into a habit strong enough for rebellion. By such condescensions of mercy, do not Princes, in some measure, act against their own power, and elude the force of their authority? Do they not give leave to worship the righteous God in a wrong way, and establish schism by law? Concessions of this kind, as it were, extorted from Royal clemency, may confirm present impunity, but cannot give innocence to Dissenters; to whom we may say, when they plead the King's grace, as our Saviour did to the Pharisees, "Moses, by reason of the hardness of *your* hearts, suffered you this, (*viz.*, to put away your Religion) but from the beginning it was not so."*

Industry, with less abilities, is frequently more serviceable to Religion, than much learning *without* it. An idle, is little better than a blind guide. But, being persuaded that this is matter of every Clergyman's own serious thoughts, I

*Matt. xix. 8.

cannot think the generality of them faulty in that idleness which is so often laid to their charge.

Some are unalterable in their resentments, never lay them aside, but seem to continue in hatred; but God will not be angry with us when we miss of being reconciled with such. He has not made impossibilities the means of pardon; nor will he make the obstinacy of one person's crime, to be an article of another's punishment. Having to do, therefore, with such dispositions, men, I hope, shall be accepted by God, if they, seeking a reconciliation, cannot yet obtain it.

A sure method of acquiring applause, is, to leave the bestowing of it to others; and determine within ourselves to perform such things only as are praise-worthy: for a frequent repetition of men's virtue and good actions, seldom appeases envy, but inflames it the more.

Recreations are designed to relieve, not to soften the mind; they are no longer lawful than answering that design. To be lawful they must be such as have no sin in them; by which it is to

be feared gaming, and some others, that are now a-days thought innocent, are in danger of being excluded. They are placed on the margin of virtue, and the least stumble throws a person into the precipice of vice. Whatever is dishonourable to God, or injurious to our neighbours, cannot be lawful diversion; profane and wanton discourse, therefore, scandal, or slander, are not to be delighted in, or to be any part of the employment of our time. All recreation must be moderate as well as innocent; for the purpose of it is not to exempt us from labour, but to fit us for it. If our passions are too much affected by our recreations; if we have them too much at heart, they are no longer lawful, because they will take off our minds from spiritual as well as temporal duties; and we shall be like boys, who after too long play-time, cannot settle to their books again. Time is to be redeemed, and not flung away; and when we consider what a great work we have to do—how uncertain we are—what time we have to do it in—we should rather

seek for recreation in the sublime meditations upon the wonderful works of the Almighty, than in the follies and trifles of life.

Our law is prodigiously severe against perjury, but it is to be feared that the crime still continues. In Courts of Justice it is almost every day's complaint, that persons appear as witnesses, who make very little conscience of an oath. Some will swear any thing for reward; and both Judges and Juries, find themselves oft under difficulties how to decide amidst contradictory depositions. An oath, the hightest human testimony, is scarcely a confirmation of truth, much less an end of strife. But the evil does not stop here: perjury hath spread itself into other places, and through other ranks of people. In contested elections, every one must be shocked almost, to think what numbers are guilty of it. If the law against bribery and corruption, is found to be so small a bar against this crime, I am urged to say, it would be well if it was repealed; for by that means, it would save people the guilt of transgressing of it.

In all reigns the Papists have been contriving the ruin of the Protestant Religion in England; and, in order that they may accomplish their designs, have been continually improving our divisions. This has been the chief engine that they have made use of, both abroad and at home; to this end they have kindled and fomented the flames of division amongst us. I think it might soon be made clear, that they have been at the bottom of all those divisions, which have heretofore weakened, and do still weaken, the Protestant interest in these Kingdoms. By this means, what they cannot do by force of arms, or dint of argument, they are in hopes to accomplish by our own intestine quarrels. They know nothing can undermine the Reformation, like the maxim, "Divide and rule;" and though they forbid their followers to consult the Holy Scriptures; yet, in this they take care to consult them themselves; for we find them not unacquainted with what our blessed Saviour observes—"A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." If, then, our differences

amongst ourselves, are so very advantageous to the Roman Catholic designs of ruining the Protestant Religion, and are the great engines whereby they are endeavouring to accomplish this their iniquitous contrivance; certainly it is an union amongst ourselves that can alone effectually disappoint them. Whatever laws are made against them, we shall never root out that restless generation of men from amongst us, unless we unite amongst ourselves; for so long as they can crumble us into pieces, they will be still hoping, that at last the time will come, when, weakened by our own dissentions, they shall destroy that interest which they have already divided. *What*, therefore, can be done so properly, for the security of Protestantism, as to unite us? This, the Papists most fear:—this is what they are always using their endeavours to prevent: this, alone, can make us formidable to them, and what will for ever blast their hopes: this, every zealous Protestant, should strive after, and pray for the accomplishing of.

Innocence is no protection against the arbitrary cruelty of power; for accusing is proving; and where malice and force are joined in the prosecution, arguments are but weak things; nay, the very good offices of the person accused, are improved to his condemnation.

It is a very reasonable notice, that, notwithstanding a person who does a kind office, could be content not to remember it; yet, it is the unquestionable duty of him to whom it is done, never to forget it; nothing recommending more to a subsequent favour, than a decent acknowledgment of a former.

It ought, I am of opinion, always to be accounted a very laudable design, for any person to endeavour to convert another from the error of his way; but I esteem it no good principle in persons to ridicule one another's devotion, of whatever kind it may be.

To hear a man assert, in a Protestant country, and in a land of liberty and freedom, 'It would be more beneficial to the nation in general,

if the common people were ignorant rather than knowing in Religion!' the thought strikes me with horror; and whatever his real sentiments might be upon this point, I think no one can entertain such an opinion but it must spring from a very weak head, or from a very ill heart.

Those persons are the most healthy, in my opinion, who live regularly, use a proper degree of exercise, and little or no physic. My reason for it is this, nature oftener requires conduct than help.

How the thought has prevailed, whether from improper notions of courage, or from the examples of men of antiquity who thought themselves masters of their own lives, I know not; but so it is, some have been averse to believe that the crime of Suicide is included in the VI. Commandment; but, that it is so, is evident from its plain and literal sense, and the reason given to enforce it elsewhere. The Commandment prohibits *murder*, and it is undoubtedly as much murder to kill one's self as to kill another. The

reason which the Scripture gives why we are not allowed to do it in both cases, is the same, because, "In the image of God made he man:" if I may not shed the blood of another, because "Made in the image of God," I cannot be allowed to shed my own, because I am made in the image of God also. To murder friend, benefactor, or even a stranger, is a prodigious evil; parent, child, husband, or wife, a still greater; because so much nearer ourselves; but if nearness of relation increases the crime, who can be so near to us as ourselves? Therefore, there is not such unnatural murder as this. Besides, there is something in Suicide, not only abhorrent to self-love, but monstrously cruel. It makes repentance impossible, unless we can suppose a person to repent of a crime before he has committed it. What allowance God may make for the commission of this deed, it becomes not us to say; it is not in man's to pretend to limit God's Sovereign Power: but, to speak suitable to the Gospel, Suicide is such as no man can repent of in this life, and

unless God forgives it without repentance, (but this the Gospel gives us not authority to speak) how can it be forgiven? They are bold, therefore, and presume far upon unpromised mercy, who venture to commit a crime which the grace of the Gospel does not pardon. Those who, out of pride, fear of miseries to come, impatience under present sufferings, distrust of God's providence, or despair of his mercy, kill themselves, their act is both vicious and voluntary; whereas, let us conceive somewhat better of those who owe this violence to a disordered mind; and let us at least hope, that God's mercy may take place, when the crime committed was not a person's free act, but done by the power of a disease, or by the distraction of the brain. Whether it be our climate, or manner of living that produces more matter for melancholy to feed upon, I say not; but sure it is, our nation furnishes more examples of self-murder than any other in the world. A Heathen, indeed, who imagined this life the only one, and that death might end both his being and his sor-

rows, might think of dispatching himself with less inconsistency; but, that a Christian, who believes the immortality of the soul and a life to come,—that Divine anger is revealed against all unrighteousness,—that without repentance there is no pardon,—and that after death there can be no repentance;—that such a person, professing the faith of Christ, and in his baptism covenanting with God to take up the cross and bear it, if need be, unto death; should, pressed perhaps by calamity a little more than ordinary, deliberately choose to throw of his burthen, by committing what he knows to be a crime, of which he knows he cannot repent, and venture the dreadful consequences of that to everlasting ages, is what nobody would ever reason themselves into a belief of, did not the practice of persons convince us that it might be done by letting us see that it is! But, however, this should be seriously reflected upon! It is impossible that shame, want, suffering, or whatever it is that causes men to be weary of life, can be thought so intolerable as to

make them force their passage into another world to escape it; when even such an unnatural escape, in all probability, may consign them to the displeasure of the Almighty.

As Faith is the root productive of Virtue; so Virtue is the fruit without which barren Faith is of no value. Our praise is to be zealous of good works, but a false zeal for speculative notions has often defeated the principal end of the Gospel. Plain as the Holy Scriptures are, in necessary doctrines, they are not without passages of doubtful interpretation; but the essentials of Faith and practice, are not affected by these obscurities; and if men had humbly acquiesced in the latitude of Scripture, without pretending to define what the Almighty has designed shall not be defined, Religion had not evaporated into so many mischievous disputes. But the curiosity of man does not seem content with the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel; but in longing to be wise above what is written: consequently, contests have arisen, and will always arise, concerning subjects the most incom-

prehensible. Hence ensues a neglect of the more momentous truths, and the decay of practical Religion. Our seed truly is good, but thorns and briers choak it.

The greatest persons are those, who, sensible of the vicissitudes of things here below, are not in prosperity insolent, nor, in adversity dispirited.

If pleasure, in this world, be the principal thing which men covet, it is strange that they do not give it themselves, in the blessing of a well-composed mind, and in virtuous actions; for these are pleasures substantial, unchangable, and untainted. Whereas, the enjoyments of the flesh are weak, short-lived, varnished over only with wine and perfumes, both afraid and ashamed of the light: if, sometimes, they are glorious without, yet they are wretchedly sordid within: they begin and end almost in the same time,—they perish even in the enjoyment. But the pleasure of the mind is gentle, noble, steady, and secure; attended neither with satiety nor repentance: it

is not accompanied with shame nor followed with remorse; nor does it ever desert him who possesses it. The way to this is to renounce others more trifling; and to contemn worldly pleasure, in the final issue of things, will be found the greatest pleasure.

Good nature is a great misfortune, when it is not managed with prudence.

The great ones usually despise witty men who have nothing but wit; these, likewise, have little value for the great ones, who have nothing but greatness. But good men pity both those who have greatness and those who have wit, without Virtue and Religion.

Money, alas! it is the patron, it is the price of all wickedness: it blinds all eyes, stops all ears, from the Prince to the Beggar: it is the pick-lock that opens the way into all cabinets and councils: it very frequently debauches children against their parents, and makes subjects rebel against their lawful governors: it turns lawyers into advocates for sedition, and causes

Divines to commit simony; it transports the professors of the Gospel of Christ into a spirit of contradiction, in defiance to the precepts, and to the practice of their Lord and Master.

Every good has its evil, and there is no advantage without its inconveniency.

O Lord! give us all grace to live cautiously, and endeavour to put our affairs in order, as if we did not know how soon we may be called to a reckoning: for this is the truest philosophy, To separate soul and body here, by wisdom, before they come to be parted by necessity. *Amen.*

I wish men would but discharge their duty, as well as they understand it. There are few or none, but acknowledge God's providence in ordering and governing the world; his omnipotence; and that it is from his mercy that we hope for future and eternal happiness! Why do they not pay him, then, that homage that belongs to him? Religion lies not so much in the understanding as in practice. He who is truly religious, walks always as in God's presence. The most

acceptable worship of him, is the imitation of him; which in a manner unites us to him, and makes him a friend to us. And even our external worship of him must be free from all wanderings and negligence, and from all vice; for it is to little purpose to talk like Christians and live like Infidels.

No persons have any cause to say, at least it is very wrong that they should, 'That they cannot govern themselves,—that they cannot conquer their passions, restrain their anger, or forbear swearing,—that they cannot keep themselves sober and chaste,—or, in short, that they cannot abstain from what is unlawful to be done, or perform such things as are required of them:' for, without doubt, they might, if they would take proper care and strive to do it;—if they would but make use of the ability which God has given them;—if they would but make use of the strength, reason, and the faculties of the soul wherewith he has endowed them,—and of the means of grace which he hath afforded

them:—I say, if they made use of these properly, they would find themselves able to do any thing through God who hath thus strengthened them; he would not otherwise have required such things of them, if he had not endowed them with abilities to do them. As to those, then, who will not perform what they should; or, will do what they should not, and pretend they cannot help it, or cannot forbear doing so; it is because they will not take pains with themselves, exert, or put forth their strength; but go on, rather are hurried on, by their vain imaginations and head-strong passions, as if they had neither understanding, reason, heart, or spirit in them.

An honest heart seems to me to be the best casuist, and will preserve us from disquiet better than all the critical distinguishers in the world: those may, indeed, help to solve a doubt; but this will not venture where there is one; and it is wisdom as great as their works contain, not to come in the way of needing any of them.

Friendly reproof, is affirmed to be better,

when bold and open, than that silent secret love, which, like a false glass, presents no spots, errors, or infirmities. But that it may prove effectual, and do the designed good, the reproof must fall upon a willing breast, and be received like a shower upon the soft mould. Those drops of rain, which fall upon hard bodies, are scattered into useless portions; so are the reproofs of a friend which fall upon a stubborn mind: there remains no advantage of it, the man suffers under this unhappiness, that the best part of friendship, is, through his own ill humour, unprofitable. It is necessary then, that no person should be proud, perverse, fretful, or inconsiderate, nor apt to make unworthy returns, or false excuses; but always consider admonition and reproof, as persons ill consider physic at the hands of the prescriber; who, for the hope and expectation of advantage from it, are contented to swallow an ill-tasted medicine.

Though misfortunes may frustrate men's expectations, and afflictions bear hard upon

them, yet, knowing that the Almighty, when he sees fit, can remove the bitter cup, and sweeten all their cares with eternal happiness; enlivened with such hopes, let them travel through adversity, with courage, and resolution; patiently submiting to the will of God, who does every thing by the rules of Divine rectitude: and, though afflictions torment us, friends forsake us, and enemies persecute us, yet, let us, if possible, contemn such misfortunes, and raise our thoughts to more permanent enjoyments. Let men's contemplations soar with seraphic wings to those mansions of Glory which await them: and though misfortunes may harass our affairs below, yet, full of the glorious prospect, we should rise superior to affliction, and smile on temporal sorrows, whilst we aspire after an eternal weight of glory.

Grant, O merciful God! that as thy Holy Apostle, St. James, leaving his Father, and all that he had, without delay, was obedient unto the calling of thy Son, Jesus Christ, and followed him; so I, forsaking all worldly and carnal

affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy holy commandments, through the same, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen. Amen.*

To keep people in hopes, is prudence: to trust too much to gratitude, is simplicity: for it is as common for the latter to be forgetful, as it is for the former to be mindful. As soon as the orange is squeezed it is cast upon the ground; likewise, dependance ceasing, there is an end of correspondence and esteem. He who never grants a favour without much entreaty, pays, as it were, himself by his own hands, and forfeits his claim to our gratitude.

Men may seem great in an employment below their desert; but, generally speaking, they look very little in one above it.

As we could not be men, unless conceived, and born into the world, so we cannot be Christians, unless we be "Born again." When Nicodemus, therefore, a Master in Israel, was to be made a disciple of Christ, the first doctrine that our Saviour taught him, was Regeneration. But

some may say, What mean you by Regeneration? I answer, That Regeneration is a change of the whole man, soul and body: *viz.*, A change from sin to righteousness—from darkness to light—from death to life—and from the power of Satan unto God.

Every thing in life is accidental; death is the only thing that we can be certain of: yet, let us look abroad, and we may very easily observe, that a great part of mankind seem to behave as if they thought all the rest certain, and death the only accidental thing.

Hope, though never so uncertain and deceitful, still is of this good use to us;—it conducts men to their journey's end, in a more pleasant and easy way.

The duties, at present, are so high upon preferment, that persons of any honour or probity do not care for trading.

PRAYER.

O God! who in thy wise providence hast constituted several ranks and qualities of men,

that they may mutually assist to the support of each other; teach me to be content with that station in life wherein I am placed.—May I diligently and uprightly discharge the duties of my holy office, and without anxiety depend upon thee, for the success of my labours: and, however contemptible I may appear in the eyes of men, let me be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord! May I be blest with a convenient provision for the support of myself and family in this life; and, in the next, may I obtain from thee the reward which thou hast promised to those who truly love, and faithfully serve and honour thee. This I beg through the merits, and for the sake of thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER VIII.

MEN seem so enamoured with vice, and our great Adversary so continually buzzes the inconveniences of Religion, and the impossibility of living up to what God commands, into their ears, that they do not care how ridiculous the plea is which they invent to get their necks out of Christ's yoke, notwithstanding himself informs them, that it is easy, and that his burthen is light. So desperately are they set against their own happiness, that, though the apology they have for their neglect be never so trifling, yet it shall serve rather than they will go without one. But they must be sensible, that the injunctions of the Gospel are given to rational creatures, not the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, or the fowls of the air. But because some would live unmolested in their vices, and easy in their plea-

sures, they flatter themselves that the stricter laws, concern, in a manner, the Clergy only. If the Ministers of the Gospel, indeed, were the only persons that had souls to be saved, the argument would be good: if Heaven was designed for Priests alone, much might be said for the pretence; but when in this point *they* are as much concerned as *we*, and the 'worm that dies not' is described by the Holy Ghost as a *motive to* deter them as well as us, it would be prudent to regard it; for there is but one Gospel, by which both the Minister and the people shall be judged. Those who have done good, shall go into happiness eternal; but those who have done evil, into everlasting torment.

The evil which it is in the power and ability of men to prevent being committed, and they do not, I think they may be said, in some measure, to be guilty of it themselves.

If men find pleasure in society, let them strive to keep fair with every one. An enemy of whatever kind may disturb. The true end of

living is to make life easy. Let the rule of men's conduct, then, be, to offer no treatment to any person, but such as would be agreeable to themselves, placed in like circumstances.

There is nothing in Religion but what tends to make persons contented, and their lives easy and cheerful;—nothing but what is suitable to nature, and agreeable to the dictates of reason;—nothing but what will ennoble their minds, enlarge their understandings, and inspire them with a generous principle of universal love, and good-will to mankind;—in truth, God's commands are far from being grievous; but his yoke is easy and his burthen is light. "There is but one Mediator between God and man, even Christ Jesus." Invocation, and worship, are proper to God only: Christ is our only Intercessor with the Father:—therefore, to apply addresses to Saints and Angels, is an absolute dishonour to the merits and intercession of our Saviour. We may take notice from hence, how erroneous and wrong the doctrine and practice of the Romanist's are;—

they blaspheme, whilst they pretend to worship; —they are grossly idolatrous in attributing that to the creature, which is due only to the Creator.

I look upon fidelity as a most valuable advantage in life. Take this away, and you destroy friendship, commerce, and government itself. So necessary is this virtue, and yet so scarce, that it is hardly to be found amongst us; witness the abundance of conveyances,—the cautionary circumstances of witnesses' hands and seals,—the vast provisions of security, to make a contract firm, yet all little enough to prevent fraud. Many are so sordid, that their faith is not so dear to them as their profit. How shocking a confession of men's deceit is this, they can neither trust nor be trusted without witnesses and securities; but a person of true integrity, of real honour, will as soon break his heart as his word; and when he has past his word, he stands as firm to it as a rock; unless the promise was unlawful, then the obligation, of course, ceases.

If a Physician observes to a man, 'You have

such a disease—you are in danger—be careful you neither eat nor drink, but such or such things;' he is so far from taking this liberty amiss, that he esteems it for a favour, gives him his thanks, and a fee for his pains. But if a Physician for the soul, tells men they are sick of burning lusts, vain opinions, or inordinate affections, it puts them immediately into a rage. And where lies the injury? Wretched and foolish creatures that we are! men may as well quarrel with a glass that shews an ill countenance, as with him who paints a vicious mind. It should always be men's business to correct what is amiss, to amend their lives, to cleanse their hearts from all corruption, and to endeavour to live in such a manner that the world may not condemn them.

It is a proof of a great and good mind, for a person to be content with himself; not to depend upon the breath of others for his satisfaction. He who covets over-much praise, does not deserve it; for what is there in us that is praise-worthy? Frail mortals we are, and but "unprofitable

servants" at the best. If there be any person who has the confidence to justify himself and say, 'I have done all my duty;' let him be cautious that he really is what he would be thought to be. Our being, our reason, we owe to God Almighty; and the only thing that we can claim to ourselves is our iniquity. We are nothing; we have nothing to boast of; and till men acknowledge this, they will never be any thing.

It would be very well if people could set apart certain times, and say to themselves, 'I am fixed—nothing shall cause me to be angry this day!' Let them go on, then, from a day to two, three, or to a week; from a week to a month; so on. They will soon grow so much masters of themselves, as to make those things their diversion, which were before, perhaps, their torment. A mild, gentle, peaceable humour, is a very agreeable comfort in society; but to him who is endowed with it, a much greater blessing; for in all difficulties it is cheerful, and in all conflicts victorious.

Dishonouring the name of God by common swearing, has this aggravating circumstance of guilt, besides others, That it leads to destroy all solemn worship of God, and obedience to his laws; for I cannot think any one will solemnly worship him whom He does not most highly esteem, nor obey his laws with sincerity, whom he does not regard. Disesteem creates mean thoughts; and disobedience will be the natural result of disregard.

I would not be thought to exhort persons to a mere form of Godliness, without the power thereof; outward observances, by whatever authority appointed, are valuable only in proportion as they proceed from a good heart, and become means to grace and edification: let them be reverently regarded, but not wholly rested in; for persons may observe, without benefit, what they cannot omit without a crime. The business of all then is, to use the external parts of Religion, in such a manner as to be improved by them, in love to God, assisting our fellow-creature, and in a moral, proper, self-government.

Men's lives seem divided between a dislike of the present, and a desire of the future. But they should consider to live as becomes them, and order their conversation in such a manner, as neither to fear nor wish for that which may never come to pass.—To-morrow, if it comes, *it is* welcome—if not, what have I lost? For that *which* is come, if we will but properly reflect, is nearly but the same over again with that which is past.

I must own, I am not such a sceptick, as to go about to persuade people, that there are not many advantages in a plentiful portion of the good things of this present world; or that it is all as one, whether a man be poor and despised, or rich and honourable in it. But yet, I think that this may be affirmed with truth—That to him who is accustomed to think of a future state, and has a just and proper apprehension of it in his mind, the wants of this life will even be very supportable. And whilst we can look up to Heaven, and there see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, we shall be able to find in it an argument,

not only for contentedness, but for comfort too, in the reflection; though we should chance for the present, perhaps, to lie as he once did, at the rich man's door, or feed on the crumbs that fall from his table.

It is worthy of our note and observation, that two persons, passionately arguing against each other, each shall lose charity, nay, perhaps both of them, truth. There is great difficulty to manage a dispute without passion; but I wish we could all reflect and well consider this point, that there is scarcely any dispute that is worth a passion.

It is but too true, that persons in trade, are now got too much into a profuse method of living; too many instead of being industrious, pursue their pleasure: few of them live as tradesmen used to do; but must have costly entertainments, such as shall perhaps lay them in much more, than they shall clear in a week. Many at first setting out, begin where their forefathers ended—I mean, in keeping carriages and country houses. We may be bold to say, there never

was a time, (in this nation at least,) wherein persons both in and out of trade, pursued their pleasure, or coveted expensive amusements, so continually, or with so much eagerness, as they now do. Hence, our papers abound with bankrupts, and our roads are infested with robbers. But there is no other way of being morally certain of meeting with success in business, but by being frugal, honest, and attentive to it; and those who will not pursue this method undoubtedly must miscarry. Those who too much, and too eagerly pursue their pleasures, might as well attempt to fill a sieve with water, as either to maintain their families, or provide for their posterity, by their business, as they ought.

That person must be looked upon as very insignificant, who has no other merit to recommend him but his wealth and riches.

Let offenders of eminence* be always brought to justice, and let a punishment be inflicted proportionate to their crimes. When common crimi-

*Lord Ferrers.

nals are detected, few know, and fewer inquire after their fate; but the punishment of great delinquents, commands mens' attention; and a strict adherence to justice, without regard to persons, will meet with due commendation.

A frequent and diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures, which fully and perfectly contain in them all things necessary to salvation; and by the perusal of which, a person may be instructed in all the duties belonging to a Christian, I would at all times earnestly recommend. But that vain curiosity is justly blamable, of which some are guilty, when, neglecting what is beneficial and clearly revealed by God, they inquire into such things as are useless and obscure, and which God would have concealed from us. This curiosity consists in these particulars, *viz.*, when men covet to know what the Almighty has not revealed to them;—when they inquire into those things which do not concern them;—when, neglecting things necessary, they lay the whole, or the greatest stress indeed, upon inquiring into such things

as are less useful;—when, not acquiescing in God's will, but searching into the reason and causes thereof, they confidently determine what are the ends of the Divine judgments, which are sometimes exercised in the world:—what is this I would ask? Is it not to pretend to be of the council of Heaven? Is it not blamable? Is it not to set up for judges, in things no ways belonging to them? and to pass sentence upon the most secret affairs, just as if they were as clear as the sun? Certainly, such proceedings must be judged improper.

"Keep thy heart, O Man! with all diligence, for out of it" says Solomon, "are the issues of life:" so are the issues of death too; there lieth the spring of all; and the way to preserve every stream pure, is to keep cleanness in the fountain. There will be no injustice in the hand where the heart does not covet: there will be no filthiness in the mouth, where the mind is not corrupt: there will be no adultery in the eye, where the affections are not lewd: there will be

no indecency in the whole man, where the spirit is such as becometh holiness: where the inward parts are sanctified, there sin will not reign. Though there may be now and then something of mutiny, yet, as long as the heart is pure, and the mind steady, those efforts of flesh and blood, however they may disturb, will not be able to shake, much less to destroy: the man is in a holy state, till he falls by his own high hand, and becomes at once his victor, and his own captive too.

How unhappy must he be, who cannot, at sometimes, be a companion to himself.

The instruction of children and servants, in the principles of Religion, is a duty of great importance, and in the Sacred Writings expressly enjoined both to parents and masters:—"I know him," says God, speaking of Abraham, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."* Joshua declares, "As for him and his house, he would serve

*Gen. xviii. 19.

the Lord,"* St. Paul enjoins fathers, "To bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;†" *viz.*, in the knowledge and practice of the Christian Religion. This is indeed the way to make children good and virtuous; when they grow up to years of maturity, to give parents comfort in them, and likewise render them a blessing to the public. And if ever the times be better, parents and masters of families, should begin the work of reformation, in whose power it is, in a good measure, by a careful education of those under their charge; to make the next age, with the blessing of God, whatever just complaints are made against this, a praise and glory upon earth.

We have many disputes concerning the weakness of human nature, and the necessity of Divine grace. In theory, some are very wise; but it would be better to proceed to practice; and, instead of disputing, let us give our minds to live well, for that will best shew what our abilities are.

*Jos. xxiv. 15. †Eph. vi. 4.

If the Critical Reviewers would but sometimes look into their own breasts, I think, as authors, they would expect more candour, than, as readers, they are willing sometimes to afford.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.

O! Almighty God! who didst give to thy Apostle, St. Bartholomew, grace, truly to believe and to preach thy Word; grant, I beseech thee, unto me, and unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen. Amen.*

It is a vain and an imaginary comfort, which some raise to themselves out of the worst part of the character of David, and other holy men; endeavouring, by their examples, partly to defend, and partly to excuse their crimes. There is a comfort, indeed, which the vicious may from hence draw, *viz.*, These examples are a great encouragement to repentance, and the forsaking of vice and wickedness; since here they may see how readily God embraced the returning Prodigal;

though they, like David, are sinners, yet, like him may they become lovers, and beloved of God, if, like him they repent, and condemn their iniquities; this is the instruction held forth to us in these examples: but as long as persons use them to flatter and sooth their consciences, in the quiet enjoyment of vice, so long do they abuse the goodness of God, in setting forth these instances of his patience and long-suffering towards us.

There is one great virtue, which is of such necessity to our happiness, that without it we can be happy in no state, no condition whatever; and with it, we cannot but be so, be our state or condition what it will,—that is, contentment. Those who asserted the sufficiency of virtue to our happiness, under any circumstances, may perhaps be explained and understood after such a manner as to stand clear, at least in great measure, of that extravagance in their commendations of moral virtue, that is usually charged upon them:—for instance, Patience always will

make a man happy in some respect, under any circumstances; it will always make him negatively happy, or less miserable. But, whatever may or may not be affirmed, among those who had but obscure evidence of a state of future retribution; yet to us Christians, whose hopes are full of immortality, through the light of the Gospel, the exercise of Christian virtue, patience, humility, contentment, and resignation of ourselves to the will of God, with the testimony of a good conscience, will be sufficient to make us happy, under any supposeable circumstances: but, if we have a discontented spirit within us, then all the outward means of happiness, honours, or riches, or pleasures, can no more make us happy, than medicine can be a remedy for an incurable disease. We may be clothed in purple and fare sumptuously every day; we may join house to house, and field to field,—may possess the riches of Crœsus,—may lord it over the world like Alexander the Great,—may rival Solomon in pleasures and enjoyments,—yet, after all, without contentment

we can have no happiness. The state of life, which in reason, bids fairest for happiness, is the state of sufficiency; but still it is evident, that this sufficiency, is sufficiency only to those who are contented and think it such; and even they, who have scarce enough, will be satisfied with contentment. But nothing can ever be sufficient to that temper which is never satisfied. A state of dissatisfaction is a state of want, though in the midst of abundance; even in the midst of plenty, it is a state of the meanest poverty. And to induce us to this contentment, let us only reflect, that be our condition what it will, our continuance here is but short; we are but sojourners upon earth, not inhabitants of it; we are travelling to another world, where we are to live and abide for ever; and this shoud make us easy and contented with what befals us in this, and regard even the good things of it, with the indifferency of a guest, that continueth in no stay. We are often complaining of the labours, troubles, and disappointments of human life; let us learn hence to look

forward; and to seek true happiness where alone it is to be found. It is Heaven alone that is the place of happiness: that alone will supply all our wants, and satisfy all our desires. In the mean time, let us be contented and diligent in doing our *duty*;—in acting agreeably to those several moral relations, in which the rule of good manners is founded;—in fearing God, and keeping his commandments;—and we shall soon be made completely happy in those everlasting pleasures, and that fulness of joy, which is at God's right hand. A happiness this, with which all that we can possibly enjoy, or suffer, in this life, like a drop of the bucket, or a grain of sand in the balance, is not to be compared.

Precipitation, besides being imprudent, is almost ever unfortunate, and attended with fatal consequences.

It is indeed, both a well-known, and as well a received truth, that it is no excuse for the commission of a crime, to say 'I did not know the law;' because, a law once promulged, every person

ought to take notice of it; and what can it be imputed too, then, but idleness, if he shall continue ignorant? It must be allowed, too, where the case is otherwise, *viz.*, where the law, not being sufficiently published, cannot be known by honest diligence, there, ignorance is no fault; because there, indeed, the law is no law.

What a dangerous thing is power, if the grace of God does not secure the heart of him who possesses it! And how unhappy are those, whose fatal prerogative it is to be able to oppress with impunity, and render it hazardous to reprove them! St. John the Baptist, very well deserved the esteem of Herod, when he took the freedom to perform an office in friendship, and to manifest a fidelity, seldom to be found in courts, and indeed elsewhere, so often wanting: a thoughtful Prince would have courted his friendship, would have been pleased with his advice; but, alas! he is rewarded for it with imprisonment and death.

Everlasting contumely attend that guilty wretch, who claims exemption from thought,

and arrogates to himself the prerogative only of brutes!

The hand, from its being divided as it is, becomes not weaker, but is more active, and, on that account, better adapted to motion. It is the same with a Statesman at the helm of affairs, who has the skill to divide his places in a proper manner, and who, by that means, makes his authority more active, extensive, and decisive; whereas, his* indiscretion, whose mind is for engrossing all, serves for no other purpose, but to disconcert his affairs.

PRAYER.

Imprint upon my mind, I beseech thee, O Lord! this important truth, 'That the pleasures of sin are short, but the pain and torment of sin eternal.' Mortify and kill, therefore, all vice and wickedness in me; but strengthen me by thy grace, that by the innocency of my life, and the constancy of my faith, I may glorify thy great and holy name. Grant that I may in all things obey thy blessed will—that, being regenerate,

*Bute.

and made thy child, by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, till I come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Enable me to love mine enemies, to do good to those who hate me, and pray for those who use me despitefully, or persecute me, in obedience and in imitation of the example of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:—to whom, with thee, O Father! and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, by me and all others, as is due, honour, and glory, praise, and thanksgiving, both now and for ever. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN persons take the freedom of going as near to vice as they think they lawfully may, it is very great odds, but by inclination they will be transported further than they should. True is the observation, 'They who will do all things lawful, will soon be induced to do what is unlawful,' particularly if they are inclined to it; because, the nearness of what a man loves, renders it more alluring:—for instance, He who has a strong inclination to speak falsities, cannot be safe, provided that he suffers himself to be excessively talkative. He who has a propensity to the satisfying of his lusts, must endanger his innocence, if he comes too near the farthest limits of a modest freedom: and he who is prone to malice and revenge, cannot but run hazard indulging himself in the utmost degree of lawful resent-

ment. For bad inclinations are never more impatient of restraint, than when they are within prospect of their satisfactions, and the objects which attract them, are near and easy to be enjoyed. Upon this account, then, it must be dangerous for persons to live within sight of those temptations they are most inclined to; by reason, the nearer they are to them, the more they will court and importune; and, whilst a person comes near a beloved vice, but does not enjoy it, he but tantalizes himself, and enrages his appetites after those vicious satisfactions, whose alluring relishes he had, perhaps, well-nigh forgotten. If, then, we would obtain a mastery over our passions, do not let us only forbear to act, but even to approach; at least, till we have so far weaned our inclinations, that nearness ceases to be a temptation; for inclination, like other motions, is swiftest when nearest its centre; and, when once it is within the attraction of it, it hurries towards it with impatience; and, if in its rage it happens to break out, and to taste the forbidden pleasure, it

will immediately recover its impaired strength, and become as outrageous as ever. Consequently, that ground, which some gain in a month's abstinence from folly, they shall lose in a moment's enjoyments. Upon this account then, it becomes us to be circumspect; not to approach too near to any vice, but particularly to any that we may be strongly inclined to.

To go from an oath, or to break a treaty, is to despise God and goodness; but, to deceive an open enemy by stratagems of war, is not only glorious, but a satisfaction, attended with immense advantages.

I trust, that the generality of mankind, will agree with me in this particular,—that the less a fine woman is adorned, the handsomer she appears; and that a homely one, is rendered still more so, by being too fine. A suitableness to every situation in life, ought to be minded and observed; and by deviating from this important rule, all, both men and women, render themselves at once, objects of ridicule and contempt.

There is scarcely any thing, so insignificant in itself, which, to an imagination fraught with omens, may not appear frightful. How frequently does an old rusty nail, or a crooked pin spring up into wonders. But, let it be observed, (and it should be an argument against them,) superstitious inquirers into future events, more or less prevail, in proportion to person's understandings, and the improvement that is made in knowledge. Impatience to look into futurity, and to know what evils may hereafter befal us, has given rise to some ridiculous customs. But, the most certain way to fortify ourselves against every gloomy presage of the mind, is, to endeavour to secure to ourselves the protection of the Almighty, who certainly disposes of every event, and governs the future, as well as the present; who, at one view, sees the thread of our existence, and sees too, into all the depths of eternity. Let men, when they lay themselves down to rest, always recommend themselves to His care; when they awake again, let them resign themselves up,

to be governed and directed by Him: amidst every threatening evil, let them look to Him for succour, and not doubt but that He will either avert or turn it some way or other to their profit; and though neither the time nor manner of man's death be within the compass of his knowledge, yet, let him not be anxious concerning it: we are certain that God is acquainted with both; that he will not fail to comfort, and help us, if, with sincerity, we obey his precepts,—and, in our last moments, when we most need,—when we most require his aid.

There are not many vices, but what idleness, is either an immediate cause, or an occasion of. We may be certain our great Adversary, has then the fairest opportunity, when men fold up their arms, as if they had nought to do; no person came into the world with that privilege; nor is there any station in life, but what we may all find business enough in, if we will properly attend and look after it. Even a retired life hath its employments; to contemplate, to counsel, and

advise,—to entertain continual thoughts of heart; and to pray for the good of those whom God hath called to more ordinary occupations, that they may minister to others with the hand, as others minister to them, by their wisdom and their care. By the sweat of the brow, or the brain, all must live; and if people would but pursue the works to which God in his providence has set them, they might turn that which was once a curse for sin, into a preservative against it. The mind of man is a very busy thing; there is a principle of activity in its nature, and the objects about it are so powerful, that it is easily invited to run out upon something or other; consequently to be either well or ill employed. The certain way to prevent all occasions of sinning, is to be always doing what is either laudable, or at least innocent. And, by dividing our time, between these two sorts of things, we shall be out of the reach of temptations, or in a capacity of defeating them. Our Enemy, how industrious soever, does not care to work in vain: by being properly resisted,

he will flee, and by degrees cease to tempt where he finds his allurements thrown away.

Whatever the condition of our trials be, from whatsoever hand they come, in the midst of them let us bear up, and not depart from our known duties to God or man:—not cast down under the sense of any indignities; but in the way that God hath set us, there we must go on, labouring and persevering unto the last, and that with composedness of temper—with cheerfulness of mind. This is true fortitude,—to be able to bear evils with an unbroken spirit, and with a heart that stands fixed, firm, and steady. It is observed somewhere, that "Cruelty proceeds from a great weakness and ungenerosity that is in nature; for the most contemptible animals can be vexatious:"*—wasps can sting, fleas bite; and the greatest cowards amongst mankind are the greatest oppressors, when they have power in their hands. But it is the man of patience, steadiness, and resolution, under injuries and affronts, that is the man of true greatness; be-

*Seneca.

cause he rules in the most difficult empire; *viz.*, he governs, he commands himself; which no person does or can do, that is carried away with the fury of his unbridled desires and appetites.

For the most part, human virtue lies in the middle between deficiency and excess. Though there are some Divine graces whereof we cannot exceed:—for instance, we cannot love God too much, adore him too much, nor resemble him too much. Yet, generally speaking, the goodness of a man's life consists in moderation; and it is, that his soul is in a right state, when he has gained such a mastery over his own heart, as that his inclinations are become regular, and his affections are brought under his power and government. A mind, so subdued, cannot lead men into folly, nor be unto them an occasion of falling.

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."* How these words of St. Paul are to be interpreted, it is not my design, in this place, to

*1 Cor. xi. 22.

dispute. But this point I take to be plain, as evident as such a thing can be, 'that not only he who comes to the Holy Communion, but he who dares to offer up his prayers to God, whilst he wilfully persists in known sins, or neglects any known duties, is guilty of a very great affront to the Divine Majesty. To come to the marriage feast, without a wedding garment, was resented as a high contempt by the King who made the invitation:* to bow the knee to Christ, and cry, "Hail, King of the Jews!"† at the same time when they spit upon him, and smote him on the head, was but a redoubling of their mockery; and I appeal to the reason of every one, whether he is not guilty of the very same sort of practice towards God, who bends his knees, or shews outward signs of reverence to him in prayers, or at the Holy Communion, whilst his heart and affections are not bent to serve and obey him; but, on the contrary, that he lives in an habitual violation of his sacred laws, in a continual contempt of his power and authority.

*Matt. xxii. 12, 13. †Matt. xxvii. 29, 30.

Profit and advantage ought never to prevail, in preference to what is honest—to what is just.

That pride and good opinion, which some entertain of themselves, make them frequently imagine others are proud too, and slight them; when, in truth, there is no such thing. But a modest person is seldom troubled with those niceties.

Such an author publishes his piece without setting his name to it: the next he publishes, is, by the author of such a piece:—I would willingly ask, if this is not more vain, than if he had placed his name to both? He would fain persuade the world of his modesty, and yet publicly owns his works.

The mark of a man of probity, lies in keeping reason at the head of practice, and being easy and satisfied with his condition; to live in a crowd of objects, without suffering either in his sense, his virtue, or his quiet—to have a good understanding at home, and to be governed by that Divine principle that is within him,—to be

all truth in his words, and justice in his actions; and if the world should disbelieve his integrity, dispute his character, or question his happiness, he would neither take it ill, nor alter his measures, but pursue the end of living, with all honesty, with all ease, and with all resignation imaginable.

There is more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury, than in requiting of it with another: in suffering, rather than revenging, because the thing is really more difficult. Bulls and bears have courage enough, but it is a brutal courage; whereas, that of men should be such as becomes rational beings and Christians.

A great weakness in receiving advice, is no less blamable than a great roughness in giving of it: it is our duty to surmount the one and to sweeten the other.

Nothing but the conscience of a virtuous man can make death easy. It would be well therefore, if people would not too much trust to a death-bed repentance:—when some come to that

last extremity, in pain, in sickness, and lie under the stroke either of Divine judgment, or human frailty, they are not commonly so sensible of their errors, or so effectually touched with true repentance, as they are perhaps distracted with the terrors of death, or the visionary apprehensions of what is to come: persons, in that condition, do but ease themselves of burthensome reflections, as a master does the cargo of a ship at sea, that has sprang a leak; every thing is done in a hurry; and men only part with their crimes in the one case, as they do with their goods in the other, to fish them up again as soon as the storm is over. Grace must be very strong in those conflicts, wholly to vanquish distressed nature. That, certainly is not the time to make choice of, for the work of reconciling ourselves to Heaven, when we are divided between anguish of body and mind; and he is without doubt very inconsiderate and weak, who ventures his salvation upon that desperate issue.

It is not for every one to undertake so diffi-

cult a province as the education of youth; it requires a critical nicety, both of judgment and wit, to find out the genius, or the propensions of a child, and to divide so accurately between the good and bad, gracious and perverse, as to hit the precise medium of encouraging the one, without discouraging the other. And this faculty of discerning is not enough, without a watchful assiduity and application; the just season of doing things must be minded, and all accidents observed and improved; for weak minds require as narrow attendance as sick bodies. It is not amiss too, to let them understand so much of the frauds and villainy of mankind, as may serve them from being imposed upon, or wheedled, provided due care be always taken that they be not in the least encouraged to practice them.

If forecast and wise contrivance do not direct men's actions and undertakings; folly and shame are but too likely to be the issue and event of them.

We love to hear jests, because we are natu-

rally envious. He who says a severe thing in mirth, may be pardoned; but, if he dwells upon the subject, he shews rancour, and should be punished. It is commonly the fate of buffoons and apes, whilst they think to make sport with others, in the end they serve only for a laughing-stock themselves.

There is no wealth equal to that which comes by God's blessing upon honest labour and warrantable industry; there is one great comfort in hand, besides the hope and assurance of more to come:—the very exercise procures health, and consequently the pleasures and satisfaction that attend it:—we have too, the delight of seeing and reaping the fruit of our own labour, and the inward joy of contemplating the happiness of another world, that shall be added to the advantage of this.

EMBER WEEK.

As the good life of a Clergyman is a perpetual lecture, and will recommend every thing he teaches, by a living image of the virtue he

inculcates; so his bad life will oftimes do more mischief, than his good teaching can repair: it will probably ruin many of those committed to his charge; but, most assuredly, it will bring a double destruction upon himself. No person can derive credit from his station, who will not on his own part endeavour to do credit to it.

A few grains of commendation, will outweigh abundance of blame, when a man holds the scales for himself; and so shocking an effect has the poison of flattery, so strongly does it fortify itself, as to defy the force of remedy. A breast thoroughly possessed by the indulgence of self-love, leaves no avenue unguarded by which sincerity may enter.

SAINT MATTHEW.

Since we so greatly excel the Heathens, in the superior excellency of our Religion, let us be careful, too, to excel them in the goodness of our lives; as we have a perfect system of Morality delivered to us, and our duty in every particular plainly set forth, let us not appear worse moralists than they were: and, as we are infallibly assured

by Divine truth itself, that this state is but preparatory to another; that, when we have quitted this, we shall immediately enter upon that; and that our good or bad actions here, will finally determine our happiness or misery hereafter: let us endeavour, by a sincere obedience to the Divine will, to secure the one and escape the other, lest our superior knowledge should only aggravate our ruin, and the Heathen hereafter be more happy than the Christian.

O, Almighty God! who, by thy blessed Son, didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom, to be an Apostle and Evangelist; grant me grace to forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same, thy Son, Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen. Amen.*

With regard to those who have no knowledge of the Christian Covenant, the Apostle as informed us, that, "As many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law:"—but he hath told

us too, that, "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they are a law unto themselves." Whether any of them, shall attain to any degree of a better life, is no concern of ours, who may be contented with the assurance, that our own lot will be a happy one, if we please:—He who hath shewed the abundance of his love to us, will undoubtedly shew, not only his justice, but his mercy, to all the works of his hands, as far, and in such manner, as is fit. There is indeed, "None other name under Heaven, given amongst men, whereby they must be saved, but that of Jesus Christ;" but whether they, who have not had in this life, the means of calling upon it, shall receive any benefit from Him, or if any, what and how,—as neither Scripture hath told, nor reason can tell us, it is presumptuous to determine, it is useless to inquire. The points belonging us to attend to, are those which belong to ourselves; that we may give due thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance

of the Saints in light, and be duly careful to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory. We have a right to the privileges of the Christian Covenant, on the supposition only, and presumption of our performing the obligations of it. Children, indeed, (which *is the* principal point I aim at in this notice,) who are taken out of the world, before they became capable either of faith or obedience, we doubt not are happy; for the general declarations of Holy Writ plainly comprehend their case; and our Saviour has particularly declared, that "of such is the Kingdom of God." But, all who live to maturer years, as on the one hand they may intitle themselves, through God's bountiful promise, though not their own merit, to higher degrees of future felicity, in proportion as their service hath been considerable; so, on the other hand, they are entitled to no degree at all, any longer than they practice that holiness, in which they have engaged to live, and without which, no one shall see the Lord. We shall be acknowledged as children, only, whilst

we obey our heavenly Father; and the baptism which saveth us, is not only the outward putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the inward answer of a good conscience, both towards God and towards man.

Kings are generally kept so much in the dark, with regard to things, and have so seldom a true character of persons, that it is a great wonder (at least it is so to me) that they commit no greater errors, either in the management of state affairs, or in the choice of their ministers.

A fool is not a fool in every thing; and he may sometimes rectify persons wiser than himself. The clear-sighted do not always see what the less-illuminated perceive:—why? Because self-love and esteem mislead us, and make us take false measures.

Liberality does not so much consist in giving largely, as in giving seasonably.

If those that take pleasure in traducing people, found no credit to their accusations, the only damage would be, that evil speaking might

probably be soon laid aside; conversation might go upon a better bottom, and useful subjects of discourse be thought of; and, to mention only this single effect, it would deliver many from the impertinence of those intruders, who think themselves acceptable for the faults which they espy, and the news which they carry abroad.

As it is the concern of wise men to reduce the evils of life, by the reasonings of philosophy; so is it, too frequently, the business of the ignorant and common sort of people, to increase them by the thoughts of superstition.

Whether the Ancients or Moderns excel in learning, if it was within the sphere of my ability, yet it is not my design to determine; but I fear thus much with too much truth may be said,—That, in the arts of knavery and deceit, the present age may have refined upon the foregoing. But this is so little for its honour, that decency as much obliges men to throw a veil over the reproach, as interest obliges all to endeavour to put a stop to its increase.

SAINT MICHAEL.

Since the ministry of Angels is in every respect so beneficial to us, our Church has judiciously instituted this festival, *viz.*, to celebrate these good effects, and to express our thankfulness to God for those many advantages which the Christian Church hath in all ages obtained, by their ministration, over the power and malice of Satan, and those mischievous instruments which he employs to effect his diabolical purposes. But we must beware of that error which the Romish Church hath unhappily fallen into, of worshiping and making solemn invocations to them; for God is, and ought to be, the sole object of our trust; to him therefore alone, ought all our prayers to be addressed. Now the members of that communion, repose their confidence in an innumerable company of Saints and Angels, confess their sins and intercede for pardon, not only to God, but to the blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Michael, the Arch-Angels, and to all Saints; but this is certainly inconsistent both with Holy Writ and the practice

of the primitive Christians; it is robbing the Almighty of his divine prerogations, and as great a piece of idolatry as ever was practised in the heathen world. Let us rather adore the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, in appointing such glorious beings to minister to our salvation; and be thankful to him for the invisible aid we receive from them. Let us comfort ourselves against the power of our spiritual adversary, with the assured assistance of good Angels, who are as forward to do us good, as the other is busy to do us evil:—and let us always behave with great reverence in the public worship of God, because these excellent beings attend to and observe our carriage and demeanour:—and let us always imitate their example in serving God here, with the same diligence and industry, with the same zeal and cheerfulness as they do in Heaven.

Did persons only take the same pains to get rid of their passions, as they too frequently do to disguise them, they would very soon find a cure for them.

PRAYER.

O, Almighty and ever blessed God, how unspeakable are our obligations unto thee, yet how insensible too often are we to them! The corruption and degeneracy of our nature, incline us to the ingratitude which render us unaffected with thy mercies. But till we know thee properly, we cannot know ourselves so; and when we survey ourselves, may we ever think of thee; may the consciousness of our weakness and crime, lead our thoughts to thee, and every reflection kindle in our hearts, the most ardent glow of gratitude! *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER X.

The innocent gratifications which God has provided for us in the world, men ought not to condemn, but to partake of them with moderation and with thankfulness. The difference of ranks and stations which are requisite for the due order of society, men ought to maintain with prudent humility, and every person should take his proper part as providence directs him, in the various employments which furnish to us the necessaries and conveniences of life; and he is bound to labour to procure such a competency for himself and his family, (if he has one,) as will support them comfortably in their present condition; and if by lawful means and proper care he can rise higher, he may allowably do it, and justly consider it as the promised blessing of God upon his industry.

Lenity abused, provokes returns, even in generous tempers, which some persons may call severe, but should not be deemed so if they are just.

It is the duty of friendship as well to commend with satisfaction as to find fault with freedom; but as on the one hand, we must take care our reproof be not too sour; so on the other, we must not be so profuse in our applauses, as to let them swallow up the usefulness of our counsels. If praise serves to nourish virtue, flattery oft destroys it. They are so near a-kin we cannot be too cautious of confounding them.

A great estate is only a great trust, a charge, a talent, to be laid out for our Master's use, *viz*, for the interest and advantage of our brethren. They therefore who do not make that use of it, but bestow it upon themselves in private indulgence, or hoard it up in bags and chests till their riches are corrupted, their garments moth eaten, and their gold and silver devoured with rust, are false to their trust and unfaithful to their

not undertaken for their conduct, nor are answerable for it to the public.

It would be extremely happy for mankind in general, if we would use both law and physic, only for necessity. They who otherwise use them abuse themselves into weak bodies and light purses. They are good remedies, profitable employments,—but bad recreations.

Interest, fortune, comfort, peace, and even sometimes life itself, depend upon reputation; and it is the more necessary to be preserved with care, because it is easy to be lost, and very difficult again to be recovered; nay, in particular cases, the common welfare, and honour of God, depend upon it too. For if a person, whose credit is wounded, be placed in any public station, either in Church or State, it will be almost impossible for him, as long as the wound remains, to do the world that good, or God that service, which should be both the design and end of his office: by this means the blow strikes deep, and affects, in some measure, the community. We

should therefore endeavour always to prevent or heal. If a person reproached, deserves it not, it is justice to be his advocate: if he does, however, it is charity: whatever it is to him, it is charity to the public; perhaps an effectual way to shame him, if guilty, and reclaim the accusers themselves, whose business is not to convince or amend others, but to expose them. Very seldom does any one's reputation bleed, but the first drop is drawn by those whisperings and backbitings which St. Paul mentions, 2 Corinthians, xii. 20, by artifices in private, where the greatest innocence cannot defend itself; and then it is like breaking in upon the dead that cannot help themselves; in which case, common goodness should move every person to be for a rescue. Even some crimes should be buried and lie quiet as in the grave, because they cannot appear above ground without scandal.

It was greatly to be wished, that few, or indeed none of the Clergy, would ever venture to give the least entertainment to pride, a vice which has been the cause of much mischief. For how toler-

able soever it may seem in men of other characters, (though I cannot applaud it in any character,) yet it can never hope for mitigation in their behaviour who are the Ministers of Christ, and amongst whose virtues none was more stupendous than His own humility. I trust then, that which most commonly and with greatest assurance, some call pride in Clergymen, is for the most part nothing but keeping themselves from some familiarities which both reason and experience teach, are apt to be attended with disrespect, if not with contempt.

There are very few people in the world who understand the just, warrantable, and decent limits of what men call bantering. But it is either too coarse, rude, churlish, too bitter, too much of it, too pedantic, too fine, out of measure, or out of season. Now the least mistake in the management of this humour, lays us open to censure and reproach. It is not every one's talent to know when, or how, to cast out a pleasant joke with such a regard to modesty and respect, as not to

transgress the fair allowances of wit, good nature, and good breeding. The skill of governing this freedom within the terms of sobriety and discretion, goes a great way in the character of an agreeable conversation. For that which we call raillery, in this sense, is the sauce of civil entertainment; and, without some such tincture of urbanity, good humour flattens for want of relief and refreshment. But there is a medium between fool and philosopher; I mean a discreet mixture that in some sort partakes of both, and renders wisdom itself more grateful and effectual.

Wherever there is temperance and prudent management, a little will suffice; and that little in time may grow to great riches. By industry and care, most of the great families in the world have been raised as well as states and kingdoms. But luxury and mismanagement have dilapidated and destroyed both one and the other. Men, making continual abstractions without addition, quickly reduce a large sum to a mere cipher, and bring themselves to want many things, who before had

need of nothing but grace and wisdom to make a discreet use of that which they had.

All that man can read concerning God's will in the Holy Scriptures, all that he can observe in the good methods of His providence and government, gives what assurance any one can desire, that God does not by any decree force man to be miserable. He hath told us indeed that death is the wages of sin, and the just punishment unto which he condemns the wrong doers. He hath said that he will judge the world in righteousnes; and having given to mankind a good law to live by, in the end will render to every one suitable to his works. Is it possible then, that men should harbour such a thought of Him, as that he should send us into this world merely to be miserable hereafter? Can we think, that God, who hath published his laws and precepts, with such express mention of rewards assigned to the keepers, and the punishment to be inflicted on the transgressors of them, should condemn men before they had a being, to those miseries which by his wise justice he hath

made, and in his word declared to be the fate of the disobedient only? There is only one way for the Almighty to force persons to be miserable, *viz*, by forcing them first to continue impenitent for sin, that by their final impenitence they may be fitted for destruction. But to say that he forces, necessitates, or determines men to sin, or in what milder terms soever some are pleased to put Absolute Reprobation, is, to lay the sins of men upon God, which is most impious; then to cast innocent people into torments, for no other cause but being innocent, that is, for doing as God would have them do, and as they could not but choose but do. This doctrine hath certainly so little loveliness in its appearance, that it cannot have many admirers of its beauty; and it is no small surprise to me how even some good men have chanced to espouse so ill-looking an opinion. But because this opinion, once fixed in a person's mind is of dangerous consequence respecting the reformation of his life, I would earnestly require every one to take heed to it, and advise no person to

trouble his head about God's secret decrees, but study his revealed will, which is able to make all wise unto salvation. God, in his holy word, undoubtedly so speaks of himself as he would have us think and believe of him; we are certain that he hath not caused his holy word to be written with a design to deceive us; whatsoever therefore he says of himself in his word, we are bound so to believe of him. The doctrine then that I am speaking of, suits better with the Mahometan than Christian Religion; and before a person can understand that there is any sense or reason in it, he must be taught to scruple no absurdity whatsoever. Can any one imagine that it can be God's will, that I should commit what he hath many times with earnestness charged me upon pain of death not to do? I know that he hath commanded me 'Not to sin,' must it not be absurd to say then, that he hath determined that I shall sin and perish? Heaven forbid the thought! If the Almighty has declared that men shall only perish for their sins, and if he has commanded them to

repent of their sins, and cast them off, that they may not perish; and if sin be a voluntary transgression of God's will and law, then we may be assured that he hath not laid on any one a necessity of sinning and perishing. He will not inflict punishment upon us, except we deserve it; and we cannot deserve punishment by an act which is not of our own choice, but whereof necessity or force is the cause. But God declares by his Prophet Ezekiel,—"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but, that he turn from his way and live."*—Here, hath not God as affectionately declared his good will towards us, as we can desire? Let people, therefore, endeavour, by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to observe and believe what he hath expressly said; not giving heed unto such who assert what themselves cannot understand.

Courtiers can never be too cautious: it is difficult for them to rise, it is slippery to stand,—but deadly to fall.

*Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Envy! thou art the parent of calumny, and the daughter of jealousy. People envy others, but why? Only because, either in point of fortune or reputation, they fear being outstripped by them: it is criminal, by reason, it is most injurious to virtue and worth, of all our natural failings; against which its malice is generally bent. Envy and jealousy seem to be hated by God; for each carries its punishment with it. The envious and jealous need no other tormentors than their own thoughts: the envious ruin their own, to disturb the tranquillity of others, and sacrifice their own repose to a perverse desire of troubling their neighbours. Envy, though generally disclaimed by both sexes, is yet as generally practised by both. We love as little to have our reputation as our chimneys over-topped by others; for, by that means we think our names become dark, as, by the other, our houses become smoky: yet, through malignity, there are who had rather pull others down to their level, than build their own up higher.

If men will take upon them to discover the true causes of duelling, they will perceive them to be as despicable as the practice is criminal. It is probable men will hear much from the defenders of this custom, of honour, and reputation, and other such high-sounding expressions; which, when reduced to their proper import, mean nothing less, in the vocabulary of these gentlemen, than what they really imply. For instance,—that honour of which we hear so much, and see so little, amongst characters of this kind, is so far from countenancing, that it condemns the practice. Honour, as a principle, is the refinement of virtue,—as the end, it is the splendour of reputation, the reward of such virtue; and the true man of honour is he, who, from the real excellency of justice, goodness, and truth, is led to act consistently with them; reverencing his conscience and his character, and solicitous to fill up the worthy part, far above the coercion of the laws, or the testimony of mere human judgment. I would ask the question then, Can it be supposed

that a principle like this, can ever justify the hazarding of our own, or taking away the life of another, for any affront whatever? Can it be imagined that a principle like this, can ever give rise to duels or attain its great reward, a splendid reputation in consequence of them? They must be strange estimators of human actions, who can believe the one or bestow the other.

One of the boldest attempts, almost, of human wit, is to write a taking Comedy. For how many different sorts of persons,—how many various palates must a poet please, to gain a general applause:—he must have plot, design, coherence, time and place, for the critics; polite language for the boxes; repartee, humour, and *double entendres* for the pit; and a mixture of farce, for the gallieries. What man of thought then, will venture his reputation upon such difficult terms?

Whenever any innovations are made in the established Religion, let us carefully examine into their merits, and not merely rely upon the authority of those who introduce them. When any opinion

in Religion is advanced, let us have recourse to that sure test of truth, the word of God, by which every error may be discerned; if it is consistent with *it*, there is no danger in admitting it; but if otherwise, we must not suffer greatness to influence, power to awe, or learning to move us, to pay an implicit obedience to any private opinion, which may be productive of humour and caprice; but let reason and revelation, with candour, determine the point. When once men resign their reason to the will and understanding of another, and esteem his dictates as infallible truths, they will in all probability be deceived. Hence it is that impostors meet with success amongst us, because men choose not to examine into the merits of their pretensions; but suffer themselves to be led away and captivated by the external appearance of affected sanctity; robbed of their peace here, and it is to be feared of their blissful portion hereafter.

Idleness, seems the most concealed from our knowledge of any of the passions; it is very violent

and mischievous too, though its violence be insensible and its mischievousness unheeded and secret. If we consider its power, it will be found to have a sway over our sentiments, interests, and even our pleasures. It is a remora that stops the largest ships, and a calm more dangerous to our undertakings than any rocks or sands. The ease of sloth is a powerful charm, that suppresses on a sudden, men's vigourous pursuits, and controls their peremptory resolutions; in a word, to give a true notion of what I am speaking of, idleness, (if I may so speak,) to some, is that blessedness of soul that makes her easy under her losses, and supplies the place of her enjoyments and advantages.

"If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings."* None that considers properly, can be able to read this passage without trembling and astonishment. If God should curse us, where should we seek for blessing,

*Mal. ii. 2.

since He is the fountain from which it flows, and by which it is communicated to us. If he should curse our blessings, what could we hope for but misery and despair? Our health, our wealth, preferment, relations, nay, our life itself would all be accursed to us; and, which is worse, even our spiritual exercises, upon which we chiefly build our hopes of happiness; preaching, praying, and communicating, would all become a snare unto us; yea, Christ himself, who came into the world to bless and redeem us, if we walk not in his fear, believe not his Gospel, or give not glory to his name, will himself be a condemnation to us; so that we may say of every thing that we have, or enjoy, or expect, these has God made curses to us, because we have not blessed or glorified Him in them. Who would not be wrought upon, then, by these threatenings? Who would not fear the Lord, thus terrible in his judgments? Who would not love and obey Him, who is so gracious in his promises? Teach me, I beseech thee, O Lord, so to place my fear upon thy threatenings, that I may

still fix my hopes upon thy promises; and though I tremble at thy dreadful indignation, yet I may never despair of thy tender mercies.

Certain it is, there is a turn in compliments of force, to imprint real passions in those with whom we converse, and it is of use when we can be so lucky as to hit upon it; yet I think it is not good to be too perfect in them, for envy will convert all into them, though we be otherwise never so virtuous. There is however a kind of necessity, to use so much of them as may reasonably humour the fashion of the times in which we live, or the persons with whom we have to deal; because, if we use downright honesty, we had need to be of more than ordinary parts and fortune to get through the world. Hence we oft see the honest, virtuous, and poor, put by preferment, whilst time-serving men are preferred. Let us not harbour too partial or narrow affections, but fashion ourselves suitably to the nature of those times in which we live. Let not our own ends, or envy, carry us beside ourselves, nor let us be so

faithful to ourselves, as to be false to others. Let us not be so narrow spirited as to be selfish, nor confine our thoughts to too strict a prison, if we desire to shun temptations, and an abundance of evil; what will not a self-lover do for his own advantage? yet, in the end, perhaps he becomes the scorn, and the reproach of men of understanding.

You ask my opinion of WILKES? I answer, that he has raised himself by faction, and possesses the art of gaining and bringing people over to his interest. But, the characteristics, which more immediately seem to distinguish him, are, a vain opinion of his own abilities, a persuasion of his uncommon merit, and a boldness of speech, which he has carried to so high a pitch of insolence, as not to spare, (to his shame be it spoken,) even Majesty itself.

It is observed, that extractions are the best conserves of knowledge, if not the readiest way to it.

In forms of speech, for instance, God forgive me! God help me! O God! O Jesus! and

others, usually made use of to proclaim our wonder, or supply the want of a compliment, with an excess of irreverence; though these unreguarded trespasses, are looked upon as the effects of heedlessness, and ignorance, rather than design, yet, I cannot help thinking they are fashions of speech, which, besides being needless and oft offensive, inures men to slighting of that awful Name, which hereafter to praise in Heaven shall be both the employment and happiness of the faithful.

No persons more fear what they should contemn, than those who should contemn what they ought most to fear: Martyrs therefore have embraced those tortures with joy, (if I may so express myself) which the wicked durst not think upon without horror.

The imagination, sometimes, has a very powerful effect upon the body; this truth is clear from those uncommon marks which several children bring into the world with them, they can only be looked upon as proceeding from the strength of the mother's imaginations.

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." We must not be over fond of the perishing advantages of the world, because they are apt to withdraw, (whether they be honours, profits, or pleasures,) our minds from other more necessary pursuits, to slacken our attention to things of a higher nature, to reduce our affections, and cause us to disrelish those more refined satisfactions, which the Gospel proposes as the principal scope and aim of all our actions.

SAINT SIMON AND SAINT JUDE.

It is astonishing that the professors of a Religion, whose basis is love, should frequently act so contrary to their profession, and persecute each other with rancour, hatred, and ill-will; and should make that, which is in itself so conducive to promote harmony amongst men, the occasion of feuds, animosities, and discord; astonishing as it is, experience confirms the melancholy truth. He then, "that is wise and endued with knowledge; let him shew his good works, by meekness of wisdom: where envying and strife is, there is

confusion and every evil work; but that wisdom that is from above, is pure, peaceable, and gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits."

To him who contents himself with little, little is much; but to him that is not contented with much, much is little.

He writes the best, who affects the least and effects the most; he who labours too intentively to please himself, oft pleases few but himself; but this may be laid down for truth, singularity and affectation are opposite to judgment and discretion. Were persons not so much taken up with a restless unseasonable contention, about the circumstantials and ceremonies, they would have more leisure for the substantial duties of Religion, and not omit its weightier matters, faith, judgment, and mercy. In fact, it is being so full of our disputes about Religion, that makes us so empty of its practice. Christians would be what they ought to be, and Christianity appear to be what it really is, if men would endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

PRAYER.

Lord! thou hast said, "They shall never be confounded, who put their trust in thee." Which trust, grant me not to forsake, for any vain trust, temptation, or tribulation, that may vex my soul; but give me thy Holy Spirit to comfort and defend me from all things that should procure thy displeasure. Thou! who art in Trinity, one God, and Lord over all, give ear to my petition, pardon all my sins, so shall I praise Thee all the days of my life, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.* *Amen.*

CHAPTER XI.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

HEAVEN deserves the utmost that men can do or suffer to obtain it: through tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. We ought to honour the Saints, then by commemorating their piety, congratulating their victories over the world, rejoicing in their glory, but chiefly by propounding their example for our imitation. Let men learn from them to be humble and meek, and submit their desires to the will of God; to govern their senses and appetites by reason, and reason by the dictates of revelation, striving against vice; that by living here, as Saints once did, they may hereafter inherit those promises which they, by their faith and patience, now inherit above.

Favour is the surest means to gain persons'

affections, and we should always remember, that severe punishment, like violent remedies, ought not to be used but in extreme necessity. This is a proper lesson for all who govern. In the mind of man there is a stock of natural generosity, which it is necessary to know and humour. Threats exasperate, and chastisement makes men revolt, when endeavours are used to force them to do their duty contrary to their will; they desire a certain degree of confidence to be placed in them, and get the glory of acquitting themselves of it voluntarily be left in their power; and to shew that we believe men faithful, oft is the best means to make them so.

Irreligion and wickedness, whatever prosperity, whatever pomp or grandeur, for a while may attend them, yet never fail to terminate in misery and destruction; on the contrary, righteousness and piety, whatever hardships they may meet with, whatever difficulties for a time they may struggle with, yet always end in satisfaction and happiness.

Whilst titles were the recompense of virtue and great actions, they seem to be a reasonable vanity, but since they are become saleable, their lustre is tarnished. However, if from a low station, a person rises and by his merit obtains a honorary title, he is not to be contemned, because some there are that wear them who never deserved them.

FIFTH OF NOVEMBER.

We are blessed with a much greater share of civil liberty than any nation upon earth, and the superior excellence of our Constitution, is the object of the envy and admiration of all our neighbours. Let us not then abuse the one or subvert the other; but by an uniform obedience to the laws of our country, an earnest endeavour to advance and promote her happiness and prosperity, a filial love of, and dutiful allegiance to our King, let us convince the world that we know how to enjoy and value our liberty, and that we are ready to venture our lives and fortunes in the support and defence of it.

The too curious, whilst they desire to know what they should not, are not able to conceive, perhaps, what they should: by diving too deep into the subtilties of reason, they oft forget the principles of Religion. As wholesome laws frequently are lost amongst the cases of the law; so, religion itself, is lost amongst sophisters, in the questions of Religion. It was the serpent that enticed our first parents to pry into the secrets of God; it must be our care therefore, that we seek not ambitiously to know more than Almighty God would have us to know. To His school, Christ would have us come, to bring faith and humility, leaving our own arguments at home: He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; the poor receiveth the Gospel, and as the Scripture says, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

I wish myself, as well as every other person, could preserve inviolable this notice, *viz.* "Not to say any thing in a passion." I must freely own, it is not then a proper season to make a reply, or

to engage in any point of consequence; because, in a fit of anger, passion clouds our understandings: let the smoke fly off, let the troubled water settle, then we shall be able to discover what reason requires from us, when the storm of passion is quieted.

There are some who assault some of the Clergy with the faultiness of their carriage, with no less clamour than ill-will; but themselves seem not always to be men of such strict virtue, as to afford that good example they so loudly call for: but know, O man! that every person, from the spade to the sceptre, is strictly obliged to an exemplary deportment as well as those of the Priesthood.

It is very wrong to imagine, (as some may,) that there is no crime in cheating the public; for public cheats, in fact, are nearly the same with private ones; for instance, the public stock is the total of every one's allotment to the public expenses; when every person's share is answerable to the interest he has in society, he pays in just

proportion; and this ought to be imagined to be the case when every one pays his legal dues: but if, whilst one pays what the law exacts, another has his goods custom-free, he enjoys the benefits of society equally with other subjects, but contributes to the charges unequally: can this be called acting with justice? Put the case as it concerns a number of persons in trade, for there is no difference; companies, or a number of persons, are societies, and as such they subsist by the execution of common laws; the most essential of which is, that every man's profit or loss be proportional to the share he has in the common stock; if any breaks in upon this rule, and does not bring to account the whole gain, but secretes part to his own private use, it would be a great crime, and men would think it so; yet this is the case which I am now considering; every shilling which one pays to the public duties, is as so much profit to the whole, and all deficiences which arise from private substractions, must be made good at the common expense, in

which every particular person has his share. It may be said indeed, what one person gets by such frauds as these, is a mere trifle divided amongst the whole community; which may be one reason they pass so oft unnoticed; but if one may defraud the public, hundreds, nay thousands may do it; and what sums such trifles, when cast up together, may amount to, who can reckon? Men can see this plain enough in other cases, and if those who did see it would consider, it would be impossible that dealing with common smugglers for unaccustomed goods, (which is making one's-self accessary to frauds of this kind, and the perjury that attends them,) should be thought so slight an affair, as by many it is esteemed to be.

It is better to do good, than to appear great.

There is a difference between knowing how to give and not understanding how to keep. May I always have a heart open and free of access, but no flaw in it: may it be judiciously bountiful, but not flowing without discretion. It is the error sometimes of weak minds and good fortunes, to

throw away money as if they were angry with it, and yet perhaps not to be thanked when they have done; no person esteeming what comes to him by chance. But when a gift is governed by reason, it brings credit to the giver and pleasure to the receiver; whereas, they are ill favours that make a man blush for his patron's indiscretion.

Chastity is the honour, as uncleanness is the dishonour of our bodies. The bodies of men being the tabernacles of the immortal soul, are more excellent than the bodies of beasts, therefore must not be abused, made like to, nay more base than the bodies of brutes. There are many reasons proper to incline married persons to conjugal fidelity; for instance, the honour and legitimation of children, the mutual comfort of man and wife, the peace and welfare of families at present, and of posterity for time to come; God's institution, the matrimonial contract, the continuance of the sacred bond, and others which may be observed out of the Scriptures. And both parties must not only be faithful but wise in their carriage; so

to give none occasion or suspicion of jealousy, or be jealous when there is no sufficient cause. We should learn out of the Sacred Records, how excellent a virtue chastity is, how pleasing to God; out of love to Him we should love this duty, desire and endeavour to perform it, and labour to be chaste in our hearts, not only before men but God. Let us resist temptations, suppress every motion of uncleanness, and with Job, "make a covenant with our eyes:" xxxi. chapter, verse 1. Many are not chaste at all, very few perfectly so. Many are wicked, the best are frail, at least in unclean thoughts, which are hardly prevented in those who abhor the sin and love the virtue. I might take occasion to enlarge, but I will not debate either of the nullity of some marriages, or determine the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, and so discover what marriages are incestuous, or inquire into the nature of divorce the cause thereof; or whether divorce for adultery doth totally separate the marriage-bond, or only separate *à mensâ et torô*, the bond continued still.

As for living or not living together, when the one party is a believer and the other not, the Apostle has sufficiently determined; I Corinthians, 7. These particulars might swell a volume, let it suffice here to observe, that God saith to all persons single, "be chaste" to those who are married, "be faithful."

Though the temptations of poverty sometimes are very great, yet the tendency of wealth, ease, and power, to sensuality, pride, and a forgetfulness of God, is so exceeding strong, that a well-instructed and considerate mind would rather submit to some degree of inferiority, than chuse to be placed in a condition of great abundance or too high eminence. Some it must be owned, must be placed in such stations for preserving the order and conducting the affairs of the world; but let those who are so, look securely to their ways, and let none of their inferiors envy them.

We are born in sin, we are nourished up in error, we no sooner receive our being from our

parents, but with it their mistakes also; we are not only diverted with the conversation of our companions, but we are infected with their faults. Thus error takes the earliest possession of us, and seldom lets go her hold, till forced either by the kind influence of God's grace, or by the inevitable stroke of death. Is it any degree of surprise then, thus circumstanced, that we should not know our true business in the world? It is to be feared, that there are too many who have scarcely any other idea, than that they are sent into the world like beasts,—put into the pasture only to devour its produce: that their alone business is to strive to outshine each other in immense possessions, gaudy raiments, magnificent dwellings, expensive furniture, luxurious diet, splendid equipage, and other materials of ambition and vain glory. But that the understanding should be so weak as not to observe, or pride should not aspire after things above these insignificant trifles:—that any one can frame a thought that the Almighty has afforded him his

being to be entirely taken up in these pursuits;—that God has endowed him with reason that he may sully it only with appetite;—as if its use was not to give him the pre-eminence, but render him inferior to the beasts that perish. Men receive their good things from the Almighty, not as a cause to forget him, but that they may be more heedful, and pay him their addresses with greater humility and thankfulness:—his gifts are bestowed upon us not to rob him of our affection, but, Alas! it is oft a consequence of them. The forced adoration of mens' last breath, is not the only tribute due to God; but too often, and I am sorry to say it, it is to be feared, it is the only one that falls to His share.

Calmly think,—coolly reason,—upon proper evidence be willing to be convinced,—then be an Infidel, O man! if thou canst.

A DESIRE.

May it be the gracious will of the Almighty, as he has been kind to place me in such affluent circumstances, to continue to me my life and

health, so that I may be able to have the understandings of my children, (daughters as well as sons,) properly improved, and the blooming beauties of their minds cultivated and brought forward. I think that God has originally given the same degree of perception to one sex as to another; education only must ripen and produce the fruit.

The day appointed in remembrance of a less divine favour, ought to give place to that held in celebration of, and thankfulness for, a much greater act of God's goodness; consequently, the Jewish ought to be superseded by that of the Christian Sabbath.

Great men are formed where merit is most rewarded.

Who escapes from error? Who alone is infallible? Who may not be deceived in those points, which with ardour he maintains? If men had this idea in their mind sometimes, they would be more upon their guard against vanity, and better prepared to perceive the force of truth;

they would have a less opinion of their own knowledge. A Heathen Philosopher* oft repeated "All that I know, is, that I know nothing." In our age, people know every thing except what this Philosopher knew. We should not be so often surprised into mistakes was it not for our ignorance; and our foolishness is somewhat the more incurable for fancying ourselves wise.

In earlier times, people, for the most part, deserved Jacob's character,—plain men, honest, and good; free and innocent in conversation; ingenuous in friendship; open breasted in their promises; faithful in contracts; without evil designs, hypocrisy, fraud, or treachery. Lying and tricking increased in it, as the world degenerated and as the manners of men became more corrupt, and these brought on evil jealousies. It was but an indifferent age, when the insiduous and false dispositions of the Jews made our blessed Saviour give his Disciples that rule of common prudence, "To be aware of men." In the first ages of our Religion, it was the noble

*Socrates.

character of Christians, that they acted in singleness of heart; neither turning simplicity into folly nor prudence into craft. Conscience then was law enough to them, they were not suspicious one of another, no more than some Indians who use neither signing nor sealing in their dealings with one another, unless the dishonesty of some Christians of late hath taught them the necessity of taking such securities. Where men live innocently together, there cannot be suspicions of evil, because there is no occasion for them; they have as little reason to fear each other as parents formerly had to be afraid of their children, when the sin of parriside was not heard of in the world; the laws after a tract of time which were made against it, were shameful monuments of some children's impiety; and so are laws now against dishonesty upbraidings of corrupt manners, public testimonies of the world's degeneracy and of the miseries of mankind. The ends of human society are lost, where truth and simpleness of mind fail, and hearts and tongues

are of different pieces; where civilities are traps, where promises are only to draw men in, where a smile is an artificial gloss upon a treacherous mind, where shews of friendship are to do the work of an enemy, but with greater safety and more certain success. And where there is such deceit, people must be as fearful of each other as if in danger of wolves. But for the curing all hypocrisy and animosities, nothing is so necessary as simplicity of heart, sincere meanings, plainness in speech, innocence in society, veracity in expressions, ingenuousness in promises, fidelity in covenants, truth in friendship, honesty in designs, sweetness in behaviour, good nature in our mutual offices, and all other possible expressions of a pure, harmless, and undisguised Religion.

This hint may not altogether be unworthy of our notice; *viz.* That a good play performed before a well-bred audience, must raise very proper incitements to good behaviour, and be the most quick and prevailing method of giving young persons a turn of sense and good breeding.

"Be angry and sin not;" that person who is always angry at his sin, shall very rarely sin in his anger.

If we think him our adversary who has abused us by unbecoming language, do not let us make him our master, which we certainly do, if by similar language we learn to abuse ourselves. The raging waves of the sea, notwithstanding they sometimes seem as if they would raise themselves up to the skies, yet coming within their bounds, if they fall upon the soft sands, calmly return back; but if they encounter with the rocks, become more turbulent. In like manner, if a person meets his adversary with calmness and a steady temper, he will send him away without his desired success; but if he stands as a rock to resist him, setting his own pride against his insolence, it increases but the storm of perturbation in his adversary's and in his own breast.

Who can expect to be admitted to the eternal enjoyment of God in Heaven, that has been alienated from Him during his life on earth? We must

be strangers to the nature of God, to the nature of Heaven, and to all divine, spiritual, and heavenly happiness, to imagine this either fit or possible. Social affections and dispositions may render a person an agreeable member of human society here; but as a man can enjoy no divine consolations here, without pious affections and spiritual exercises, so he appears without them, utterly disqualified too for any portion in the heavenly state. But if we walk with God here on earth, if our chief happiness here arises from the enjoyment of Him and our reliance upon Him; then the heavenly life may be said to be begun, God is with us and we with him. The happiness of Heaven hereafter will not so much differ from this in kind as in degree. If this be our happy case at present, we have the earnest of the Heavenly Inheritance, we taste the fruits of the Celestial Canaan.

Impostures are usually as fatal to cheats, as to those who are cheated by them. All the gain that results from a piece of knavery, is the shame

and guilt of having acted a part wholly unworthy the character of an honest man.

It is a more difficult task than by some may be imagined, to find out that proper medium wherein consists the agreeableness of humour. Too stern a severity is terrible, too sneaking a complaisance offensive; a man should be neither too indulgent nor too austere. To be over officious is displeasing, to be continually disdainful provoking, and that genteel mediocrity that has nothing too sharp, yet degenerates not into insipid, is difficult to be hit upon.

To speak truth, it is better to crush a jest between one's teeth, than to let it escape, to the displeasing, to the affronting of any one whatever.

In our promises to friends, we ought not to use subterfuges, equivocation, or mental reservation; for by failing in sincerity, we lose our reputation. People sometimes promise hastily which is desired of them, without being certain they have either power or inclination to perform; this levity exposes them to the contempt of those

whom they thus abuse; when a promise is made, it ought to be discharged as soon as may be, without making the expectants languish. It is giving doubly to give with a good grace, and it looks as if we repented of our obligation when we are backward to accomplish it.

Few apply themselves to get quit of their faults, and plant real virtues in the place of them; contented with appearances, they would have the reputation of virtue, without the trouble and merit of it, and are more careful to disguise their vices and ill qualities, than to cure them. Artifice, disguise, and seeming virtues, serve instead of real ones, and dexterous impostors pass sometimes for meritorious men, though at the bottom they want the common principles of honesty.

Virtue is sufficient to confer respect upon the lowest character, and without it, nothing can preserve the highest from contempt.

PRAYER.

Almighty God! who didst give such grace to thy Holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; I beseech Thee, grant unto me and all Christians, that we being called by thy Holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves, obediently to fulfil thy commandments, through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen. Amen.*

CHAPTER XII.

In the Established Church, we pray for the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, to assist us in the work of the ministry, "That God, the giver of all good gifts, would give his grace to those who shall be called or ordained to serve in the sacred ministry of his Church; replenish them with the truth of his doctrine, and illuminate them with the true knowledge and understanding of his Word."* But this is not to be expected, without mens' own endeavours, and the outward means of study and diligent application. As we cannot expect that God will make us good without our own endeavours, so neither must we hope that he will make us wise without the same diligence. We are not only to desire divine knowledge, but, to seek for her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure: the son of Sirack tells us, he

*Prayers for ember week and litany.

not only asked for wisdom openly in his prayer, but also sought after her diligently unto the end; by which means he profited much therein. Our Saviour directs us not only to ask but seek, in order to find what is good for us: Matt. vii. 7; and men may hope for the greatest degree of spiritual assistance, now afforded, when they are careful to make use of the best means in their power for understanding the Holy Scriptures.

It portends much of God's displeasure against a nation, when he suffers the clamours of the commonalty to pass the boundaries of laws and the reverence of authority; we, alas! have had lately much of this; they have not forborn rude deportments, both in contemptuous words and actions, even to the sacred person of Majesty itself, as well as to his Ministers. But let every religious person offer up his prayers to the Most High, that he may heal our divisions and not suffer us, through our sins and follies, to become a prey to our inveterate adversaries.

There is no particular object so good, but it may have the shew of some unpleasant quality annexed to it, in respect whereof our will may decline it; on the reverse, there is no particular evil, that hath not some appearance of goodness, by which to insinuate itself; for evil, as such, cannot be desired, if that be desired that is evil; the cause is, the goodness which is or seems to be joined with it:—goodness moves not by being, but by being apparent; many things therefore are neglected which are precious only because their virtue lies hid.

"Past ten o'clock." In general, I cannot perceive what material service these watching men (as usually styled,) do in the streets, unless it be to disturb people hourly with their noise, under a pretence of taking care that they may sleep peaceable in their beds; I think, instead of preventing mischief, they often are the cause of it; *viz.*, by taking honest persons to confinement, who would otherwise retire in peace to their own habitations, and provoke gentlemen, by ill lan-

not only asked for wisdom openly in his prayer, but also sought after her diligently unto the end; by which means he profited much therein. Our Saviour directs us not only to ask but seek, in order to find what is good for us: Matt. vii. 7; and men may hope for the greatest degree of spiritual assistance, now afforded, when they are careful to make use of the best means in their power for understanding the Holy Scriptures.

It portends much of God's displeasure against a nation, when he suffers the clamours of the commonalty to pass the boundaries of laws and the reverence of authority; we, alas! have had lately much of this; they have not forborn rude deportments, both in contemptuous words and actions, even to the sacred person of Majesty itself, as well as to his Ministers. But let every religious person offer up his prayers to the Most High, that he may heal our divisions and not suffer us, through our sins and follies, to become a prey to our inveterate adversaries.

[redacted]

guage, to commit those foibles it is properly their business to prevent; in short, (pardon me if I judge amiss,) I cannot help thinking but that too many of them are often guilty of more roguish tricks than they themselves detect, and occasion more disturbances in the streets than they ever prevent.

It becomes persons to content themselves with that kind of dress, which becomes both their sex and their condition; not striving to exceed or even equal that of a higher rank, nor raise envy in their own. What difference is there now between that of a citizen and a courtier? a taylor and a gentleman? a servant and a master? the maid is often taken for the mistress, and the valet for my Lord: the depravity of persons' minds appears as much in that corruption as any. Dress, in truth adds no true worth to any one, it is ridiculous as well as wrong, therefore, to waste too much time and thought in it. Beauty needs no ornament, deformity admits none, but what we ought all to covet, that of a

meek and quiet spirit. Let us clothe ourselves as richly as we can with Christian Virtues, which can alone render us lovely in God's eye, and will not a little help to render us amiable in the eyes of men. The beauty of the mind charms more than that of the body, and no beauty of it is so charming as Virtue. Youth is very apt to run into error with respect to dress. Vanity proceeds from levity of mind, for which the young want ballast; they have an in-born violent desire of pleasing, and the ways that lead men to authority and glory, being shut to them, they strive to make amends for that loss by the graces of their persons; It is upon this account that the colour of the ribbon, or the curl of a hair, are with them matters of importance. This excess is become very extravagant; we are not satisfied with our own modes and fashions, but are mad after those of our neighbours. Thus, to the love of dress, is added that of novelty; they bewitch weak minds, filling them with pride and folly, drive out every good thing and choke the seeds of

Virtue. Negligence is an error too, which should always be avoided; but neatness, proportion, and decency in dress, are always commendable.

Good and virtuous men always behold with detestation a bad action.

Outward significations of reverence in divine worship, decency of behaviour at church, are not such matters of indifference, as persons need not take any care of. Who, that has the true fear of God in his heart, can make so bold with the Majesty of Heaven, as if he was altogether such as himself? To present that to the best of beings, perfect above thought, and blessed beyond addition, which he would be ashamed to offer to an earthly governor!—To be stiff, haughty, to loll or sleep over the Divine Service, to sit as those that were above it, or be doing such trifling actions as if they came only to slight it; to talk, laugh, or look about, this is blame-worthy. How disagreeable soever it is to see the bad liver a complete formalist; yet, who can think well of such a behaviour at Divine Service, as does not

compose persons into seriousness, in their solemn addresses to God; it becomes persons never to approach him, but with humility, but with reverence, and godly fear.

Can a compliance, at sometimes, with innocent diversions, be any reflection upon a man of learning? It rather helps to unbrace the nerves, and causes him to return with greater pleasure to his studies. There is a time for all things; to appropriate the morning to study, the evening to recreation and the enjoyment of agreeable sober company, is surely no indiscreet regulation of time; by this variety, every person may gain the character of a gentleman, and will in reality be perhaps the polite scholar.

Mens' faith to God, should be seen in their faithfulness to men: "Shew me thy faith by thy works;" i. e., our invisible belief by our visible life; for mens' actions are the proper commentaries of their hearts: what a person does we may conclude he thinks, though perhaps not always what he speaks: men may say they

believe in Christ; but certainly men would never speak as they sometimes speak, think as they think, and do as they do, if they thought that their thoughts, words, and deeds, must come to judgment: if men would but thoroughly believe that God always beholds them, they durst not sin: no thief is so impudent as to steal in the face of the judge, "Whilst yet his eye is upon him." Men love themselves well enough to avoid a known pain or anguish; and did they believe torments eternal, there would be more danger of despair than security: "If the righteous scarcely can be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"*

The end of reading is to inform, and the design of it to instruct the mind; men had as good let it alone, as offer to read without attention: he only reads to purpose who endeavours to lay up in his mind what he reads, and shews forth the fruit of it in his life; let this then be the end of all our reading, and let us shew that we observe what we read by practising of it.

*1 Pet. iv. 18.

Our kind and beneficent Creator hath covered the earth as a well spread table, with every thing to supply our necessities, and promote our pleasures, from which we are no ways debarred, provided we enjoy them as rational beings; He is too good to have created these things to be snares in our way; his design in affording us them in such a vast variety, was to make us happy, and we may enjoy them with innocence, if we be careful to do it with thankfulness.

He is truly a great man who can neglect the applause of the multitude, and enjoy himself independent of its favour; this is an arduous task, but it should comfort us to think it is the highest step to which human nature can arise. Applause and acclamation are dear to man's mind, but it is a more exquisite delight to say to myself, "I have done well," than to hear the many pronounce me great and glorious, unless I myself can join with them in my own reflections.

It is to be observed, and it may be lamented, that a person very capable of improving man

kind, frequently neglects to communicate his knowledge; either, because perhaps it is more pleasing to gather ideas, than to impart them; or, to minds naturally great, few things appear of so much importance as to deserve any very particular notice.

"Give place unto wrath;"* St. Paul's precept is as wise as it is holy; for wrath groweth by opposition, but spends itself when any one gives it place. If you be fiercely pursued by a serpent, step aside, the serpent will rush on and miss you. So in like manner, are you set upon by impetuous choler, give it place by a gentle declination, it will pass by harmless. If you receive any real injury from an angry person, whilst he is so, expect no satisfaction from him, but appeal from him in wrath, to himself when calm.

Good fortune seldom fails to alter the air and behaviour of a person, and makes him different in his conversation and proceedings; but this is a great weakness, to set one's self off with what is not our own. If virtue and religion are (as indeed

*Rom. xii. 19.

they ought to be,) above all other things, no advancement, no favour, would be able to change men either in their temper or their carriage.

Those who have callings and occupations, (as a great part amongst us have,) are certainly obliged to follow them with a conscientious care; as for those whose circumstances do not oblige them to follow any profession, yet they ought to have caution too. Slothfully, no person should live, some designs and business men must pitch upon, wherewith to employ themselves innocently and usefully; otherwise they will scarcely be able hereafter, to give a tolerable account either of their time or talents unto God.

He who dares to think any sin small and trifling, it is to be feared, may soon be brought to imagine no sin great.

Clergymen should have no need of any human laws, to restrain them or make them do their duty, but they should rather be a law unto themselves. However, the law of God, which they deliver, should be sufficient to guide them and

cause them to do all things well, without giving offence, without incurring the penalty of any human law, for leaving their people or neglecting of their office. A Minister of God, above all others, should be ashamed to suffer as an evil doer in any case whatsoever. Non-residence is certainly a very great evil, and scandalous affair; it is much then, how a Clergyman, having consideration, or a sense of piety, or even common honesty, can be guilty of such a thing, as leaving his flock to the care, or perhaps negligence of another, or sometimes indeed even without President over or Curate amongst them. It is God's love and mercy to his people, that He gives them the blessing of his Holy Word, and of his Ministers to preach and explain it unto them and to pray for them; on the contrary, Himself accounts it a great evil to deprive people of their teachers; that as it is the worst, so it is the last evil that He will send upon his people; thus saith the Lord, by the prophet Isaiah; "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of

affliction; yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more; but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:" Isa. xxx. 20. What wise Minister therefore that considers, would wilfully bring so great a curse upon himself, or calamity upon his people, "as to fly from them as if he was a hireling;" John x. 12, 13. And that after he hath received a message with a commission from God, to preach his word unto them, yet like Jonah, to go some other way. Jonah i. 1, 2, 3. If he was a faithful shepherd, he would rather delight to dwell amongst and watch over his flock himself, and not trust them to another, but would give them the opportunity of being happy in him. It has been, and I hope still is looked upon as a great blessing, and what every religious and virtuous person desires, and extremely values, to live in a place where the Church is near, and a good Minister amongst them. Let it then be the care of every one who has it thus in his power, to make his people happy by residing amongst them, or as near unto them as he can, shewing

himself a pattern of good works, and watching over them for good; and whenever any do amiss, to admonish, rebuke, and exhort them, as with all carefulness, so with all meekness and prudence, patience and long-suffering; that with the blessing of God upon his endeavours, he may save himself and those committed to his charge.

It would be well if persons would be particularly cautious not to trifle with things of importance, nor sport with things sacred and awful; they should not indulge a spirit of ridicule, as some do, esteeming themselves witty upon every occasion, subject, and person; this will as unhappily bias the judgment, as it may incline persons to pass a low esteem, sometimes on valuable objects; whatever evil habit men indulge in practice, it will insensibly obtain a power over their understandings, and betray them into error and mistake.

Who would have supposed, that St. Thomas, who believed the least and last of Christ's Disciples, upon so short a conference should equal

if not excel them, in his absolute confession? Let no one be disheartened then himself, or condemn another; for none hath so weak a faith but that his Saviour may one day or other, out of his infinite mercy, call him and heal him as he did St. Thomas. He made him who did not believe as soon as the rest, to become as sound as the rest, apprehending and applying the merits of his Saviour to his soul,—"My Lord and my God!"

When divine revelation shines in the world with glorious evidence, and men shut their eyes against it, the God of this world is suffered to blind them, even in the most obvious things. God above, for this cause, sends them strong delusions that they should believe a lie. Transubstantiation I think, amongst the Roman Catholics, is a most glaring proof of this, beyond whatever could have been thought of or expected, amongst beings pretending to reason.

The affections are not to be eradicated and expelled, but the best way is to change them and fit them for our purpose, and so make them easy

and advantageous to us. Reason, and nature, and christianity, approve of the emotions of our affections, so far as they are instrumental to virtue, and are restrained within due limits. The passions are not wholly to be rooted up, but to be diverted; they are not to be banished but to be curbed and kept under; these Gibeonites are not to be killed, but to be made serviceable and kept in obedience. Our blessed Saviour wept over the grave of his friend, thereby hallowed all tears and consecrated all natural and human affections. It is certain that the passions are of use in Religion, and may be subservient to some noble purposes of it; therefore the Apostle, Col. ii. 8, might justly enter his caviat against those flinty Philosophers, who talked of an utter dispassion, and would make men to be iron or stone.

Insincerity and hypocrisy is not only mean in itself, but in many instances prejudicial to others; it argues both a bad heart and a weak head. Little artifices of dissimulation may at

times perhaps be successful, but true wisdom assures us they cannot last long, they will at last recoil upon the person who uses them, and blast his reputation; whereas, to be sincere is the best character a man can desire, it is the foundation of every virtue, and it hath in the world many advantages, which craft and dissimulation are justly deprived of.

"God so loved the world, that He hath given his only Son, to be born of a pure Virgin, that He might redeem us from iniquity." If He had had any thing better, He would have given it unto us; is not this to purchase our love and affection dear enough, when He purchased it with such a price? Indifferent goodness has a title to our esteem and reverence; how should we not then love infinite goodness? Surely we shall not let goodness cease to be amiable, because it is infinite: may we cast off, then, all immoderate love to the creature, and fix our esteem on God our Creator, and let us endeavour to love Him above all things!

St. Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, regardless of the resentment of the Jews, fixed his eyes and thoughts upon Heaven, saw the "Glory of God and Jesus, standing at his right hand." The affirming of this so enraged them, that raising a clamour and stopping their ears against cries for mercy, they rushed upon him, dragged him out of the city, and there stoned him to death. Whilst the Saint was upon his knees, and praying for his murderers, that the guilt of his death might not be laid to their charge (in this copying the example of his blessed Master,) "He fell asleep." So soft a pillow is death to the good and virtuous, who leave the world as quietly as a weary labourer goes to his rest.

O Lord, by whose special grace the holy Evangelist St. John, obtained the character of the beloved Disciple, and became afterwards exemplary for his piety and charity; grant I humbly implore Thee, that by the force of his good example, I may be encouraged to promote the honour, and serve the purposes of Thee, my

Creator and Preserver; to esteem Thee my greatest treasure, to love and delight in Thee alone, to enjoy temporal goods in such degrees, and make them subordinate, to such ends only as thou hast appointed, and to receive every dispensation of thy providence, with such a becoming meekness and resignation as may render them serviceable to thy glory, and my own eternal happiness; that by transcribing the example of this Apostle, into my heart and practice, I may at last arrive at those mansions of bliss, where the souls of the faithful rest in everlasting joy. I beg this through the merits, and for the sake of thy dear Son, and our alone Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen. Amen.*

The end of those who regard nothing but earthly pleasure and the vanity of the world, is sad, is gloomy; their mirth at length subsides into sorrow, and their short-lived amusements are succeeded by an eternity of torments. Let every one follow then the wise man's advice; "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Then

will they close life with joy and gladness, their labours will end in rest, and their pains in eternal ease.

Thou, O God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify Thee by their death; mortify and destroy in me all vice and wickedness, and so strengthen me by thy grace, that by the innocency of my life, and by the constancy of my faith, I may always glorify thy most holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen. Amen.*

Forgiveness is a noble kind of revenge, and he enjoys a true composedness of mind, that seats himself above the height of an injurious hand. I will endeavour so to remit a wrong, as that it may not encourage others to offer it, and so retain it that I may not provoke the Almighty to retain my offences against him. Whilst we think to revenge an injury we begin one, perhaps by misapprehending that for an injury that was never so intended. Disregarding of it, puts ill-

will out of countenance, and in a causeless wrong the best remedy is contempt.

The vanity of doing charitable actions has made some negligent of their families, but much oftener the vanity of making one only rich in a family, has caused some to be regardless of near relations and encouraged intimates; nay, it may be even their own offspring. Upon one they heap all they can, leaving the rest disappointed of what they had reason to expect, and perhaps in distress for want of it. A different kind of evil sometimes happens, persons are imposed upon by artful people, who ingratiate themselves by flattery, complaisance, and officiousness, till they obtain interest sufficient to carry every point they please in their own favour, or for the advantage of those who employ them, and supplant others who in nearness or desert, either stand before them, or at least on a level in some respects: nor are persons with all their cautions at times, so much on their guard against these wretches as they ought to be; at sometimes the

fault is their own; they suffer prejudices and piques to influence them, contrary to the justest motives, and perhaps their own former intentions. Now is not this extremely wrong? that a groundless dislike, or suppose even a great offence should change a rational disposition of things, when above all expectations may have been given favourable. Whatever right men may urge to do as they please with their own, in my opinion they should not act in this manner; but ought to look upon a proper disposal of what they are possessed of, as a matter of conscience, and take in every circumstance that should have weight. Nearness of blood is a ground of preference which should not be disregarded, without very particular motives to the contrary; farther claims are not to be overlooked, when persons have ability to take notice of them; kindnesses received, promises given, faithfulness in service, merit, and want, and the performing of this duty as people ought, is one valuable instance of goodness; whilst alive, will give them comfort in their

own breasts, and as far as it is known will procure them regard from men, and when dead, will do them lasting honour.

As high as the heavens are above the earth, so far do temporal things fall short of things eternal. We have no words to express the joys of a blessed immortality,—scarcely any ideas to think of them; the Apostle, though admitted to a glimpse thereof, pronounces them beyond his utterance and above human conception; yet this we may be assured concerning that state,—it will be free entirely from grief and pain, from every sort of affliction, and from every shadow of adversity; there will be no possibility of receiving injuries from men, or the powers of darkness; there will be no violence, hatred, or hostility; no strife, discord, or disaffection; no fraud, falsehood, or dissimulation; but truth, peace, joy, love unfeigned, and universal charity, will prevail: virtue will then appear in its proper charms, shining outward in every glory that itself shall

produce, or Heaven confer, and shedding inward complacency and joy. The society will consist "of just men made perfect," of Angels more so, at the head will appear our Redeemer, in triumph over his and our enemies, possessed of all power and glory, rejoicing over the purchase of his sufferings, the fruits of his goodness, and the trophies of his love. How will the faculties of the righteous be then enlarged, and what a scene of objects ready to employ them! What depths of knowledge, what displays of wisdom, what manifestations of equity! When the works of the creation, the difficulties of providence, and the dispensation of grace, shall be laid open and set in a clear light:—when God himself shall be revealed, when He shall exhibit his light and truth, and communicate the perfections of his nature, without intermission, measure, or end. Then will it be known what those joys are, which are the fruits of righteousness and the reward of well-doing.

PRAYER.

O Lord! we must confess that men may be learned, yet very bad livers; they may be deep geometricians, or sublime astronomers; but it is through thy grace only that we become good men. Grant therefore I beseech Thee, to me and to all men, that by thy grace we may be enabled always to controul our passions; bear adversity, be inspired with notions of true Religion and goodness; and may these notices raise in us an utter detestation of all vice and wickedness: this I beg for the sake and through the merits of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen. Amen.*

PRAYER.

I humbly beseech thee, O God! that flesh and blood prevail not in their conflicts against the spirit, nor the world and its fading glories, cheat me into ruin; let not the subtile enemy of souls supplant me with his tempting wiles: give me courage to resist when called to the combat; patience to endure, when called to suffering;

firmness of mind to persist immoveable in my duty, when temptations and evil suggestions labour to seduce me. Exchange, (if it be thy blessed will,) the false comforts of this world, for true gladness, and the assistance and sweet satisfaction of thy blessed Spirit. Instead of carnal love and sensual inclinations, let a love of, and a desire to serve Thee, be diffused through my whole heart, and reign unrivalled there! *Amen. Amen.*

"To God, only wise be praise, through Jesus Christ for ever."* *Amen. Amen.*

*Rom. xvi. 27.

E N D.

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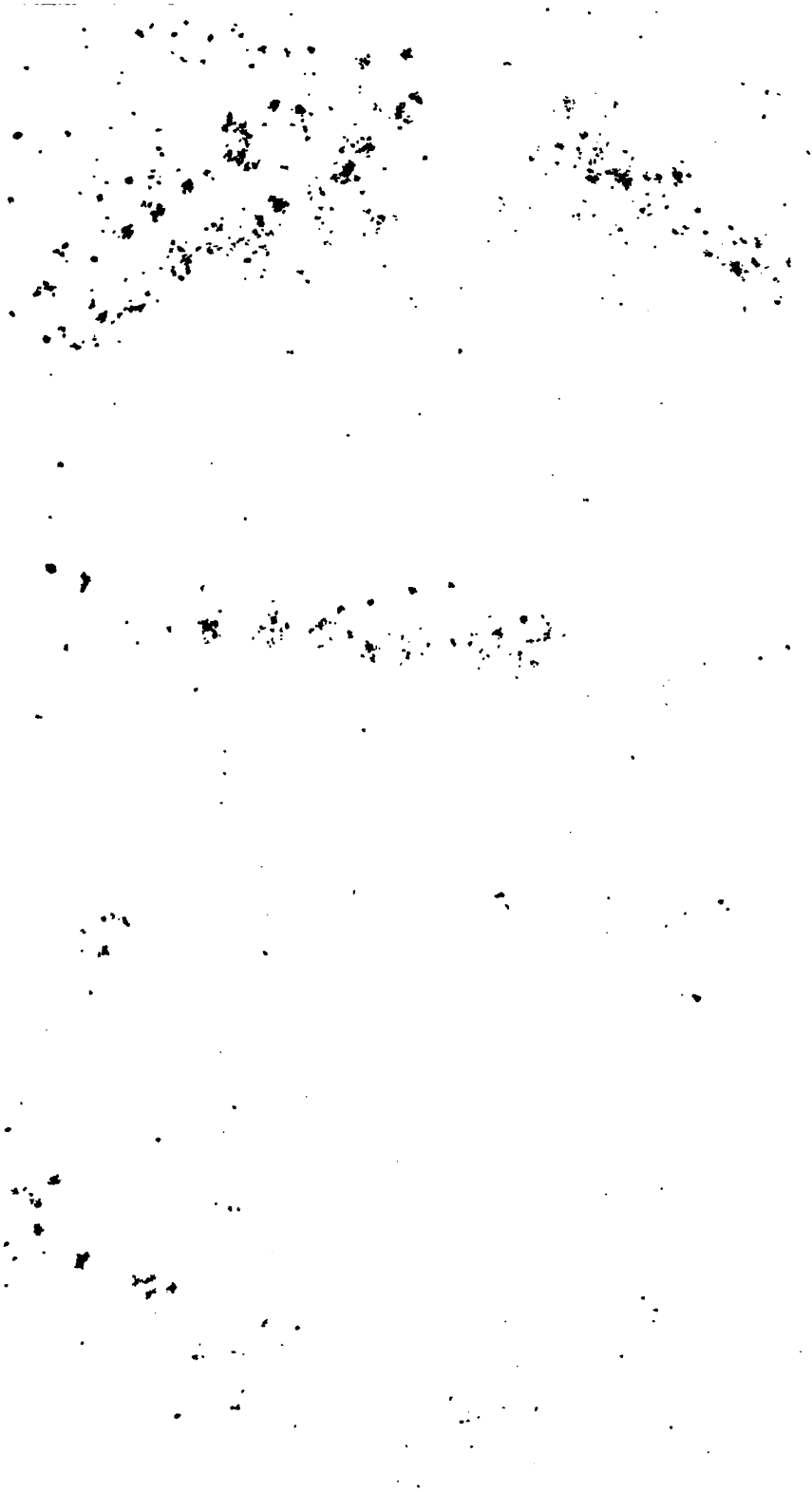
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